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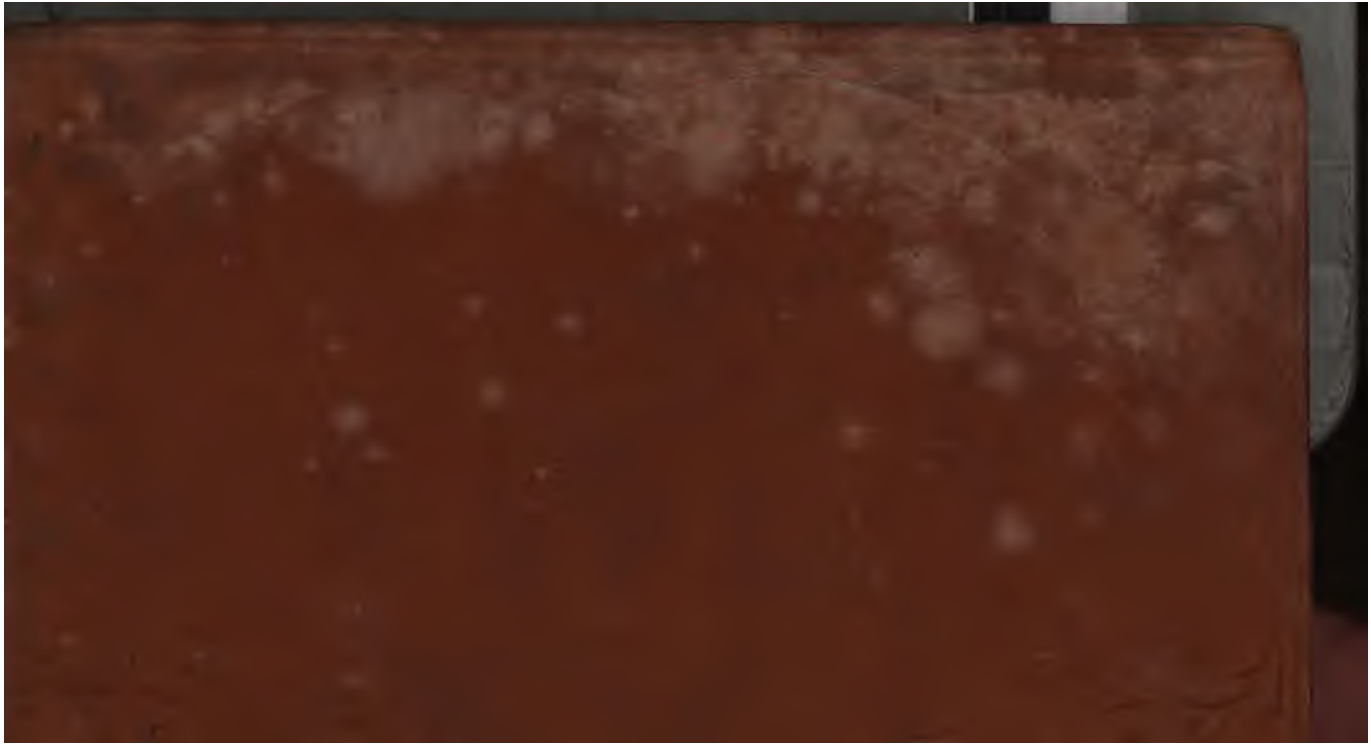

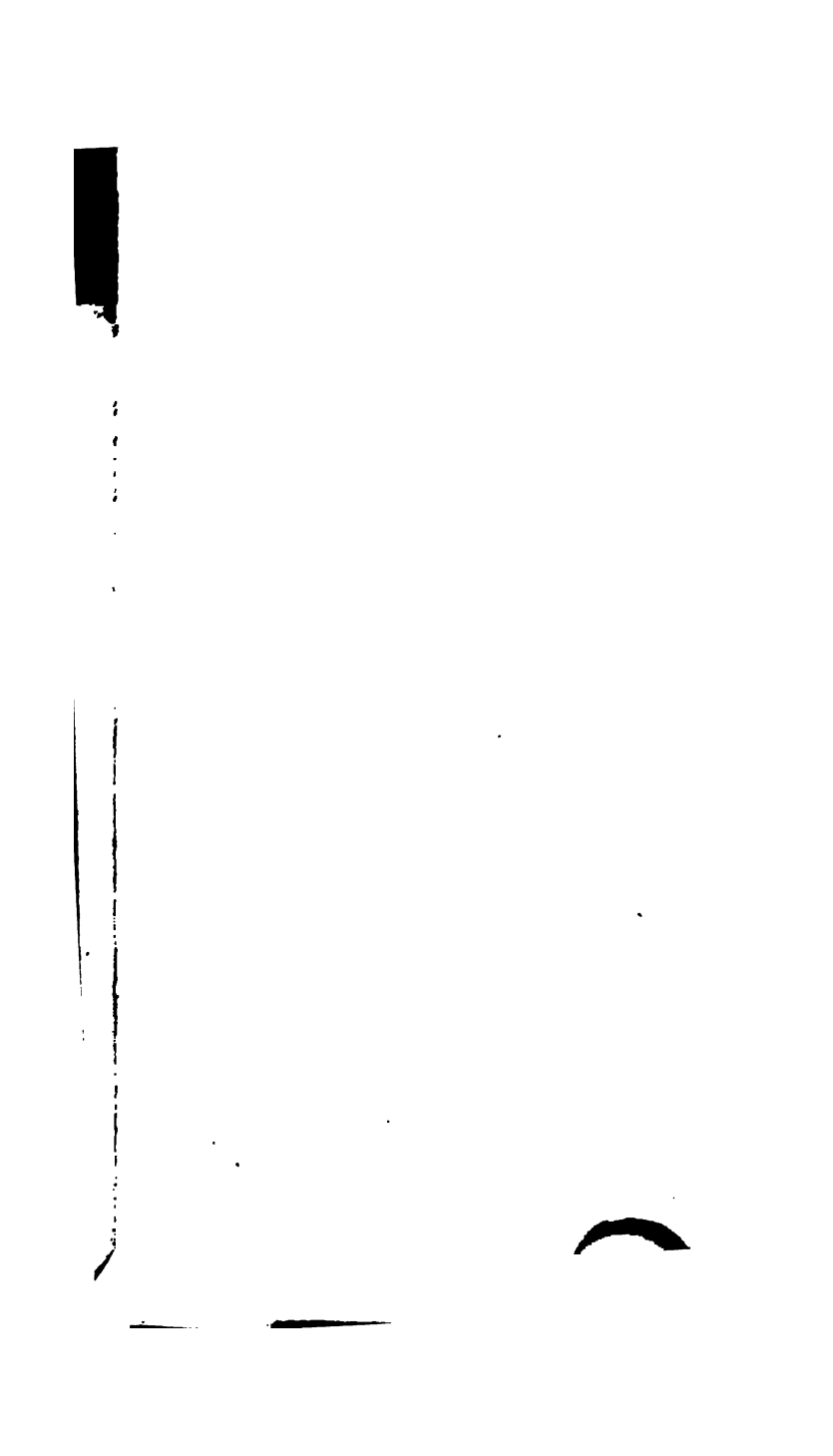

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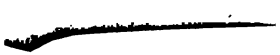
ARE AGAIN DEDICATED

WITH GREAT AFFECTION

AND RESPECT.



PREFACE.

To be rightly understood, this work must be regarded, not as a collection of Hymns, but as a single Religious Poem, dedicated to the honour of the Virgin Mother, and preserving ever, as the most appropriate mode of honouring her, a single aim, that of illustrating Christianity, at once as a Theological Truth, and as a living Power, reigning among the Humanities, and renewing the affections and imagination of man. Theism was God's primal Revelation of Himself to the Patriarchal world; and it included the promise of the Messiah. Christianity was that Authentic Theism with the Promises fulfilled. In it the One God revealed Himself in the Trinity, and gave Himself to man in the Incarnation. Of these two mysteries, the latter, comprising the more palpable aspect of Christianity, is the least beyond the range of the Poetic Art. But in Religion, the palpable, and the transcendent, although distinct, are never separated, except where Religion has been materialized. If the present Poem begins with pieces that relate to "The Unknown God," and ends with others which speak of the Blessed Trinity, the intermediate portions have also a reference, not

the less constant for being indirect, to those all-embracing Verities.

We are alike meditating the Incarnation, whether our *direct* theme be Incarnate God, or that Virgin Mother through whom it pleased Him to become incarnate. In either case, our point of view is at the centre of Christianity. In the former case, the higher elevation commands a wider field of vision, and one "sun-clad" with the glory of a stronger light. Yet, for some purposes, the lesser elevation and the fainter light are not without their advantages. We are not thus so much brought face to face with matter too awful for poetry. But in the Incarnation, the Atonement is, of course, included—the sacred Death in the assumption of that Life which subjected the Lord of Life to Death. The blood that trickles from the wound is the same that mantles also in the cheek of health. Christian Poetry must ever be a "Rosa Mystica," the palest leaf of which has a suffusion from Calvary.

But this is not all;—the Incarnation contains within itself all the mysteries of our Lord's Life on earth, His hidden life, His ministering life, His Sacramental life in His Church. That one mystery, "The Word was made Flesh," is, as St. John tells us, the test by which we are to "try the Spirits." Around it, all Doctrines group themselves, and each of them has a special relation with her through whom He became Flesh. Some years ago, this truth could hardly have been illustrated for English readers

of Poetry without controversy; and Poetry, though it may be Theological as well as Philosophical, can never be polemical. But that higher Teaching, of which Wilberforce's work on the Incarnation was perhaps the most fruitful specimen in earlier days, and Keble's "Eucharistic Adoration" the most striking in later, has left but a narrow field for discussion on this subject among those who are capable of comprehending it. Few would now risk the assertion that the Angel might equally have been missioned to any other Hebrew Maiden as to Mary—that her Sacred Motherhood was but a material Instrumentality—that there was no connection between the Function assigned to her, and that Grace which made her, more perfectly than any beside, hear the words of God and do them. The Consent—"Be it done unto me, according to Thy Word"—the Beatitude—"Blessed is she who believed," are now well understood: and the contrast drawn by antiquity between the Disobedience of the First Eve and the Obedience of the Second is commonly appreciated. So again, as regards Mary's place in Holy Scripture. Few would now fail to see that she has a part in that first of Prophecies respecting the "Woman" and her "Seed," and in St. John's Vision of the Woman "clothed with the Sun," whose Son was ruling on high, (whatever else may be referred to also in those passages,) or scruple to confess with the Fathers, that from His Cross, our Lord consigned all His brethren to His Mother, in St. John, to be her

sons. Apart from other Types or Prophecies, she has thus a place at the beginning, at the close, and at the mid point of the Scriptural Scheme. Among the learned, it is now understood that there is as good reason for the fainter utterances of Holy Scripture, and for its occasional silences, as for its louder voice:—and that that meaning which each man can snatch for himself from the surface of the Written Word is to its full contents, but what Sense without Science can snatch from nature, when it has cast aside Telescope and Microscope.

Wordsworth, in one of his later Sonnets, measuring the claims on our reverence possessed by Scientific Discovery, makes this the Test of its worth—"Help to Virtue does it give?" This is a Test the force of which relatively to other subjects also few would dispute. If Mary holds, indeed, a peculiar office, relatively to Christian Truth, and the Christian Life, as she held, and ever retains, relatively to Him Who is the Truth and the Life, this is matter in which virtue is concerned, and therefore the whole Intellect of Man, including his Imagination—that Imagination which, when it works either lawlessly or in subjection to Sense, not Truth—is among man's most fatal seductions. Let us cast a glance round these two fields of thought, and first, as to Revealed Truth. Mary's place in Theology reminds us then of the Fall, in the most pointed way, because, as the Mother of the Incarnate God, she had an *Instrumental* part in that great Restoration, whereof the

Second Adam was the sole *meritorious* cause. In Predestination, her part was also special: for in that original Decree, respecting the Incarnation, the base, as it were, of all subordinate Decrees, He Who "became Flesh," and she who clothed Him in Flesh, were both included. Redemption she preaches to us, specially because she was its first fruits, being redeemed, not only from the punishment of sin, but from sin itself through the foreseen merits of her Son. She tells us of Grace, because it was only in consequence of being "full of grace" that her soul was so strengthened as to exclude all corruption from first to last. So again of Mediation. God, Who might have conferred all His Gifts on us *immediately*, has conferred them all through the One Mediator. Throughout the whole economy of Redemption, a vast system of "Mediation" is carried out, deriving its whole virtue from the one great Mediator, but binding together all His family on earth in offices of Supernatural Love and mutual good, as the domestic and social Ties bind them in offices of natural love and help. In this great System, Mary, assisting us as she does relatively to every part of our being, and as a Mother, has an office that belongs to her alone among the Saints, and yet remains wholly distinct from that of the King of Saints. In mediation, in the sense of Atonement, even the Mother of the Atoner has no part; in Intercession, another form of mediation, she has incomparably the highest part among all

those who are commanded to make intercession one for another. And yet even the highest of creatures has no more a part than the lowest in that which constitutes the incommunicable Intercession of her Son, viz., His perpetual Presence in Heaven, the Regal Presence of that Divine Priest, who offers for ever that Human Body which suffered on earth. What else can bring home to us so vividly the remembrance that the Atonement was a Divine Act, and that prayer, too, rests upon a mystery that is more than human? The chief of creatures stood beside her Son's Cross, and offered Him to His Eternal Father:—but this her Offering was not the Atonement. They prayed together on earth. He Who in His unimaginable Humility condescended to be ever learning, in one way of knowledge, what in a higher way He already knew, had learned from her to pray: yet, even then, between the might of her prayer and of His, there lay an Infinity.

Everywhere we find that the clear conception and familiar contemplation of the highest *Created* Greatness are the preconditions for worthy thoughts respecting that Greatness which is *Uncreated.* This is most felt the higher that Mystery in connection with which we contemplate Created Excellence. It cannot eclipse what is immeasurably above itself:—it can assist in defining it to our intelligence, as the straight line measures the curve. Thus, as to the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity. It is simply impossible, as history has proved, to question that

doctrine where Mary is reverenced at every hearth as Mother of God the Son—who is given to man by the Eternal Father, in the Love and Power of the Holy Spirit. The Title, "Mother of God," was accorded to Mary at the General Council of Ephesus, not because there was then any question relatively to her, but solely because, when all other Tests had failed, that Title was found the surest vindication of her Son's Divinity against Nestorian prevarication. So, again, as Dr. Newman has remarked, her position in Theology obviously excludes the Arian Heresy, which, denying our Lord's Divinity, leaves Him no place but that of chief among creatures, the place which she fills. In any system not *identified with* the Doctrine of the Trinity, as well as admitting it, there could be no more room for Mary than there could be room for a colossal statue in a low-roofed cave.

And so of Theism. There is a true, and there is a false Theism. No one can fail to feel the distinction between the Authentic Idea of God, and an arbitrary abstraction made by Man's Intelligence, if he has always known that between Him Who is the Infinite, and her who is the highest of creatures, the interval still remains infinite—that, compared with Him Who is Absolute Being, she who is the crown of all created Excellence, remains but a crowned Dependance, the most creaturely of all creatures, the Handmaiden to whose *lowliness* He had regard. We may go further. The place divinely

assigned to Mary is the protection not so much of any doctrine in Religion, however fundamental, as of Religion itself in its essence. Mary is the guardian of all those mysteries which relate to the Sacred Infancy: through her the Church keeps a perpetual Christmas; through her the childlike heart lives on in the mature knowledge; through her the Palpable is preserved in the Spiritual, and the Truth of Fact holds its own against that subjective habit of the modern mind, which, "with error opposite to that of Narcissus," to quote Dante, wastes away because it imagines that it sees but its own face in all things, believing in no other reality. This form of Philosophic Hypochondria makes Religion itself but a type of good things, not the living bond, by which fallen man is bound again *(re-ligatus)* to his Creator, through that Truth which alone is Freedom. This is the most dangerous form of unbelief, because the most plausible. It leaves sacred names unchanged. By a sort of evil transubstantiation, it changes into itself the *substance* of Religion, leaving its accidents unchanged. The "Species" remain to give speciousness to a Philosophy whose ambition it is, not to overthrow this or that Religion, but itself to take the place of all Religion. It need hardly be remarked that such a Philosophy would speedily be worked up into newer forms of thought. "The earth hath bubbles as the water hath:" but this dusky bubble would soon break. It is not a question as to the best of Religions, but as to Religion,

the Last and the Sole, together with all its gifts and bequests—so often turned against itself.

The human mind, shrivelling up, and dwarfing itself, often reduces to pettiness its loftiest subjects of thought, without perceiving the change. It is thus with Theism. Nations have believed in a God, and yet believed that He created Man without Free-Will, although with responsibility, and created all but a few for endless punishment. Schools of Philosophy have exulted in the supposed discovery of their science—a God in whom Sanctity had no part—the Philanthropist, the Mechanist, and Contriver. But conceptions of God more recent and more ambitious, are at least as spurious. Thus, there are some who think the system of Reward and Punishment, of Heaven and Hell, unworthy of a Divine Revelation;—not knowing that God is Himself Heaven; and that Hell is the exile from God, self-inflicted by persistent hate of Him. As well might they quarrel with Virtue for being "its own *Reward*." Others would subordinate to His own Creation that Being, Whose Attributes, of which we know so few, exceed in number all the possible combinations of notes on all the harps that praise Him, and Whose Essence stretches illimitably beyond Angelic ken. They have never really taken in the difference between the Creator and the Creature, and their shortcomings have arisen, in part, from their having never fixed their attention on a sufficiently great exemplar of creaturely existence. The diversity between dif-

ferent grades of being becomes most marked when we contemplate the nobler specimens of each grade. It is easy to confound the lower forms of vegetable, with the lower forms of animal life; but when we rise to the higher forms of each, their diversities are unmistakable. In reaching towards the Idea of Divinity, we are not helped, and we may be much hindered, by comparisons taken from Pagan Divinities; for these last were, in a large measure, arbitrary conceptions, as where Purity is embodied in the same Divinity as Pride. Such creations have no place in the truth of things. The highest idea of the creature, aids us to think worthily of the Creator, because it is a Truth; and it helps us in the same way as Nature helps us to conceive of the Supernatural; viz., on the one hand by analogies, on the other, by opposite conditions. Let us illustrate these remarks by an example. Ambitious thinkers often exclaim against the theological statement, that God has made all things for Himself, and for His own glory, on the ground that it attributes to Him selfishness and vanity. This is more than mere confusion of mind. A man that makes himself his own object, defrauds his neighbour who is of equal worth with himself; but, above all, he sins against that true Centre towards Whom all things should gravitate, by building up in self a false centre, and so deifying himself. But such statements have not even a meaning, when applied to God. He alone is Absolute Being: suns and systems are but as

motes in His beam. He is Himself the true Universe, and the external universe, material and immaterial, is but an overflowing of that Eternal Love which has its infinite Operations and unmeasured Blessedness in the internal universe of the Blessed Trinity, and the relations of the Three Persons, One in the Unity of Godhead. These lofty negations are but a clumsy attempt to assert in exclusiveness what has always been included in the Confession of God, viz., that the Creator delights in creating the Good of His Creatures. But He more than creates that Good. He *is* that Good; and this He could not be, were He not the Term and End of all things, as well as their Origin and their Life. God is all Love: and God is also His own Divine End. To evade the difficulty in reconciling these two statements—a difficulty which exists for "the Mind of the Sense" alone, and neither for Faith nor for the higher Reason—our "advanced thinkers" substitute, for the vast and manifold Idea of God, a notion alike arbitrary and false. They implicitly assert either that God is not the end of all things—that is, that He is not the Infinite, or else that what He is, He does not know Himself to be—in other words, that He is not the Truth. Their aspiration is to outsoar the anthropomorphism of the vulgar; their achievement is to create for themselves a God in their own image. They say, "our God shall not resemble a selfish and vain-glorious man;"—and say it because their notion of God is but Man.

The humblest peasant's idea of Mary would of itself preserve him from such debased conceptions. He venerates her more than all other Saints, as he venerates Saints more than Kings; but he knows that to offer to her the great Christian Sacrifice, would be, at once, as blasphemous and as preposterous as to offer it to the lowest of creatures, since the oblation ever presented, alike in Heaven and on earth, being Divine, and offered by a Divine Priest, can only be offered to the Holy Trinity. When the child just taught to pray, sees his parents kneel down to pray also, the greatness of the unseen Being, Who also permits Himself to be called Father, comes more closely in upon him than it could come if he only saw other children at their prayers. To witness the adorations of the angels would exalt our own. It is thus that they are exalted also by the thought, and by the daily footsteps in our hearts and lives, of one, who, venerated by the angels themselves as their Queen, bows herself down before God in an adoration, by so much deeper than theirs, by how much that Vision of His Glory accorded to her is higher than theirs, esteeming herself to be a nothing, and Him to be the Fulness of All. Is her estimate an Illusion or a Truth? If it be a Truth, that first and last of Truths must set its seal upon the Idea of God prevalent among those who revere her.

These are but a few illustrations of the mode in which Mary ministers at the Table of her Son, for the solace of His Guests, like the Queenly matron

sung of by the best among the Anglican Religious Poets since the days of George Herbert.* She is qualified thus to give help in the Church by a special characteristic—her resemblance to the Church. Few things can be said of the Mystic Bride which are not applicable to the Mother. Like Mary, the Church is Virgin and Mother; and her fruitfulness is, not in spite of, but in necessary association with her purity. If the Church is ever offering up her Divine Lord, so Mary offered Him at the Presentation, and at every moment of His Life. If the Church is ever pleading for her children, so is Mary; and the earliest pictorial representation of her is the "Orante" of the Catacombs, who stands, with outstretched arms, in endless intercession, among tombs still red with the martyrs' blood. If the "Sword" passed through her heart, the Church too, has to suffer. If it was a hidden life that our Lord lived with His Mother for thirty years, it is a Sacramental Life that He leads with His Church. If Mary could be suspected, cannot the Church be reviled? The Church is a Teacher, and so is Mary: "Wisdom doth sit with children round her knees." It is not only as a Mother that Mary has a place at every hearth. Mr. Longfellow's "Golden Legend" has a passage of rare discernment, which illustrates the confidence reposed in Mary by that of little children in the intercession of an elder Sister. Mary has the elder Sister's teaching office no less. As Faith "comes by

* See Archbishop Trench's "Gertrude of Saxony."

hearing," and as it is "with the heart man believeth," so a great part of what belongs to Religion is learned by us, not like the irksome school-lore of our boyhood, but like our native tongue, that is through sympathy and unconscious imitation. It is here that the elder sister is helpful. We all know how the younger children see through her eyes, and hear through her ears, and how the feeling, ere yet completely revealed in her face, is mirrored in the smile or blush upon theirs. She initiates not their thoughts only, but their perceptions: and out of a thousand germs latent in their minds, her influence vivifies such as are destined to emerge into reality. Mary has such an office among the brethren of Adoption. She moves beside us: she goes in before us. It has been well remarked, that the Hymn "Stabat Mater" penetrates our hearts because it makes us gaze on the Cross, not so much with our own eyes, as through those of the chief of the Bereft. But Mary assists equally in sunning out every other Christian Affection. In her "Magnificat" she daily leads forth the triumph of the Meek; annually her Paschal Anthem, "Lætare Regina," helps those that wept to rejoice. To this day the "Ausonian Shepherds" leave their flocks on the mountains, as Christmas draws near, take their stand beneath the pictures of the Madonna at the corner of every street, and, with those reed-pipes that once but made boast of sheepfold or orchard store, gratulate her through whom "to us a Child is given." There are lessons without sermons

–a lore that calls the sage away from his lamp. Who would not advance more bravely if an Angel held his hand? In our earthly pilgrimage we are given these helps because our best instincts demand them; and the Supernatural does not despise the natural. To us, too, is extended a healing hand, all light; and it loosens itself from ours, but to beckon to us from the heavenly shore. The thought of Mary amid the heavenly Court, is the thought of our own pilgrimage accomplished, and our rest completed. The Church is ever "stepping westward," and her endless evening does not lack its Evening Star. The remoter and full-orbed glory of Mary shines in the eyes of the Militant Church beyond this vale of tears—an image of the Church Triumphant.

Few things are more wonderful than the difference between the relations in which Mary stands to Christian Science, and to the Teaching of that Science. Her Teaching is of all Teaching the most unpolemical. It leaves but its blessing even at the door that will not open to it, and passes on to those franker natures that rest, like the Patriarch, at the door of their tent. It is in the heart that it lodges Truth—that heart which it "penetrates without a wound," knowing that thence it must ascend into the higher Intellect, and diffuse itself through the being. It conquers the Controversial Spirit, that Fury of the Schools, without a battle, by leaving for it no place. And thus Religion remains the soft but mighty Mother of Man, and Truth retains her placid seat

in a Temple which attack alone can convert into a Fortress. When the Faith is associated from early days with those unhappy contentions, which are but its accidents, there Religion may either live on as a boast, protected by the Institutes it protects, or it may be trampled out as a cause of offence; but in either case its essence is ignored. It gives no glory to God, and no peace to men of good will. It bickers on every hearth, sows the Dragon's teeth in every field, inflames every youthful presumption, and envenoms every sore of age. There is no greatness which the Spirit of Controversy cannot reduce to littleness. We deal with God's Word as we do with His Works. Half-a-dozen obtrusive white houses, scattered along a range of hills, so arrest the eye, and force it to draw imaginary lines connecting house with house, that in the invisible net-work of this luckless geometry, all the grace and the might of mountain outlines is lost. So fares it with the sacred Scriptures, when favourite Texts have become the entrenched camps of amateur Controversialists:—they may know the Bible by heart: but for them the Word of God exists not. Never once can they wander through its infinitudes with the reverent Eye of the Seer, with the simple wonder, the loving delight, the blameless curiosity of the child. For the love of Truth they have substituted the love of *Knowledge discovered*, and the joy of Contention.

But the remedy? Does it lie in disparaging Doctrine? Certainly not; for Revelation not setting

forth a Truth would be no Revelation. Does it lie in substituting Love for Truth, as the soul of Christianity? Certainly not; for Christian Love is inseparable from Christian Truth. To love a Divine Redeemer, we must know that He *is* Divine, and all the Councils for successive Centuries were needed but to refute the Errors that assailed that Truth. Such warfare must always be going on. On some far border of the Christian Empire, there will be always eruptions of new Barbarians; and they must ever be repelled, lest they should reach hearth and home. The battle of Truth must last till its last foe is destroyed. The Luminary that lights that battle-field is the Mystery of "The Word made Flesh:"—a sister orb reflects its light:—and to the end the prayer of the Prophet-Chief will ascend—"Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon in the Valley of Ajalon." Relatively to Christian Science, Mary has a place, so inextricably interwoven with it throughout, that she cannot but add force to its most stringent affirmations, and a severer exactitude to its most refined definitions. Religion *is* not a Science; but it *has* its Science, and can never discard it. If, relatively to that Science, as well as to the teaching of it, Mary is a help to the Christian Church, here, again, we find that she helps it because she resembles it. Mary "pondered all these things in her heart." This is what the Church is ever doing in her Theological processes. She remembers and she witnesses. Her Science is based upon her profound and secure

heart-appreciation of that Truth originally committed to her; and consists in following onward that changeless Truth into clearer light, from Definition to Definition, as the Providence of God suggests, and His Grace permits, through the aid of that Spirit Who was sent to the Apostles, both that He might call all things to their minds, and also that He might lead them on into all Truth. With a method chiefly Deductive, she deals with the great Truths committed to her, as the Mathematician deduces corollary from proposition. Thus, only, could a method of Thought exist in connection with a subject matter to which Induction and Experiment are as obviously inapplicable as a priori reasoning is to natural Philosophy. But such Theological Thought, what is it? It is a *long Meditation.* It is to "ponder all these things in her heart." Relatively to our affections, our minds, and our spirits, Mary is thus a Type of the Christian Church's Unity; and the Type again is a bond, moral, not governmental, that cements that Unity. She is not "Rock of the Rock:" but she is a smile from Him Who is Light of Light.

The second Office referred to above, in connection with Mary's place in theology, is that of ennobling human Affections by elevating our conception of human Ties. If we do not exercise our Affections as Theologians say, "*in God,*" they must be Idolatries; since, in that case, the stronger they are, the more they must lead us from God, binding us, not to heaven, but to earth. They must thus become the

prisons of Love, or its sepulchral Vault, not its temples or its palaces. But in Mary we have a Love at once the strongest, as a human love, and the most obviously a deliverer from the Idolatries of human love. To her Son, in His Human Nature, Mary stood in the relation, not of a Parent only, but of Sole Parent; yet her love for Him, not only was consistent with a sovereign love for God, but lived in, and advanced with, her love of God, for her Son was God. The Affection corresponded with the Tie. All human Ties met in her, in their essential Unity. We venerate the Virginal estate, and we venerate the maternal; but in Mary these two glories were united, in a union only less wonderful than that of the Two Natures in her Son. It is a revelation of Woman, such as she was created—not as the mere Female of an animal-intellectual Race, but as one of those two forms in which Humanity, made in the Divine Image, was permitted to mirror its manifold and Infinite Creator. Mary has a peculiar office also relatively to her Son's human character. Parallel mountain ranges help us far more to conceive height, than a single range could do, although the highest: and thus the spotless Humanity of Mary, when duly pondered, is a great assistance to us in conceiving the Human Character of our Lord, the altitudes of which we can hardly measure with reverence, and our endeavours to realize which, heartily, in what seems nearest to ourselves, may fail, to the extent of an implicit, though not explicit,

denial of His Divinity. The Redeemed Humanity, like the Unfallen, has been set forth before us in a twofold Type. The Virgin Maternity has fixed in the heart of that Humanity an Idea never to be dislodged. There it sits ever since, enthroned; and thence it diffuses blessing over those who but dimly apprehend it, and tenfold blessing over those who "discern" it. This Idea has done for social Life what the most authentic Theism could not by itself have done. Amongst its many gifts, it has lifted to an immeasurable height the Institute of Marriage, which received its first benediction in Paradise; it has consecrated it into a Sacrament, and rendered it irrevocable. It has done this, in no small measure, by giving it the counterweight of the Conventual Life. It was impossible for the married Sister to remember the Sister beneath the veil, without remembering also that the home brightened with children, and the convent home on its lonely height, must alike, though in different fashions, be homes of Reverence and of Worship, of Purity and of Peace. From these two Homes went forth Christian Civilization. There moved over the earth a conception of Human Character such as the Greek had never dreamed of. It was that of Womanhood. It had not the strut of Pagan Hero or Demigod; but it was greater than all the gods. And yet how few elements made up that greatness!—only Humility, Purity, and Love. And with how few franchises it was endowed! Only with the joy of one who from

childhood had panted for Divinity, as the hart for the water brooks, and had found Him; and again, with the sorrow inseparable from Love in a world of sin—the Sorrow of a Heart transfixed, and from which the Sword never departed. Such was the Christian Idea of Womanhood. It came from Mary. It took its place beside that Image of Man associated with the "Ecce Homo"—the purple robe of regal dignity, and the Head crowned with a crown of thorn.

That fair and fruitful Idea which set free the intelligence and the heart of man, raised his imagination proportionately, and created the Art of the Ages of Faith. It re-revealed Beauty—no longer the Syren's smile, but the radiance on the face of Truth—the sweetness and graciousness of Virtue itself. Everywhere throughout the worlds of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, shone out that nobler Beauty, severe at once and tender, mystic yet simple, gladsome yet pathetic. It was a Spirit, but a Spirit ever embodying itself in sensible form, for the redemption of Sense. Compared with Classic Art, its insight was deep, and its flight was high: but it had one fixed home, the "Holy Family"—a limit apparently narrow, yet found to be inexhaustible. Again and again the mighty Masters returned to it, and gathered strength from the touch of their native soil. Art grew neither more heroic nor more beautiful when it abandoned that early Eden, and exchanged the higher for the lower knowledge. Religion, in keeping it central, had kept it human.

The Holy Family was the centre at once of things earthly and things heavenly; and Art, when it saw that Vision, wisely desired to build Tabernacles in its light, and whispered, "it is good for us to be here." This was the true preaching of the Incarnation. The Pictured Prophet or Apostle might be honoured for his work or his word alone: but that Infant on His Mother's knee could have significance for one cause only, viz., because He was God.

These, then, are some of the moral influences which are connected with the love and reverence of Mary, rightly understood, and which are not the less precious, because, like the Bible, the Sacraments, and all else that is good and helpful, they are capable of being abused instead of used. To say depreciatingly, "But Mary could not but love her Child in God, since He was God," and such things, leaves the marvel undiminished. The marvel is, that God should have made the creation of a being such as Mary a part of the Redemptive Scheme. The Divine Redeemer might have taken to Himself a human form out of the dust of the earth, as Adam's body was taken; or He might have been born, as Mary was, of earthly marriage, and yet, like her, have remained wholly exempt from earthly taint. But He willed it otherwise. He made both the Divine Maternity, and the Virginal Maternity, the means of the Incarnation:—and thus, by necessity, shone out this wondrous Sign in the face of Creation. The Sign grew clearer as it grew nearer. In the earlier

dawn of prophecy it was said, "The Seed of the *Woman;*" in its later announcements, "A *Virgin* shall conceive." Those who understand the Incarnation will not imagine that to gaze in glad affection upon this Sign, has no tendency to draw us nearer to Incarnate God.

There exists a very sublime doctrine respecting the Incarnation, which, though not a matter of defined Faith, has a peculiar interest in our own day. Scientific discovery has made the universe so vast a thing, that the modern Imagination, overpowered by its grandeur, and not duly weighing the comparative worth of Spirit and Matter, sometimes finds a difficulty in a statement limited to this, viz., that, for the sake of a Fallen Race on this petty planet, such an event as the Incarnation took place. Centuries before this difficulty had been felt or fancied, some of the Theological Schools had supplied the solution of it. They had maintained, as a probable opinion, that, though the Fall doubtless imparted to the Incarnation its *Expiatory* character, and made the God-Man, the "Man of Sorrows," yet the Incarnation itself would have taken place even if there had been no Fall, and taken place for the exaltation of the whole Creation, not merely for the Redemption of a part of it. According to this opinion, the Creation, without the Incarnation, must ever have remained an imperfect work. A *finite* Universe must have remained at an infinite distance from its Infinite Creator, buried far away as it were,

in a perpetual Exile—a Harp without a Harper—a robe with none to wear it. It was part of the Eternal Purpose that the Creator should Himself become a Creature, and thus *assume* His own Creation. That Creation is twofold, Spiritual, and material; and Incarnate God therefore assumed it most fitly in assuming the nature of man, who is made up of Soul and Body, his Soul being the lowest link in the scale of the Spiritual Creation, while his Body occupies the highest grade in that of material nature, as she works up successively through her mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, to her highest work, the frame of man. The "Good Shepherd" had ever decreed to go forth into the lonely desert of Finite things, and bring back Creation, like a lost sheep on His Shoulder, to His Father's Throne. Creation, thus assumed, was at last to find a Divine King to rule it in equity, and a Divine Priest to offer up its Adorations, till then voiceless and dumb. From its Head in heaven to its remotest depths, the Universe, thus taken into alliance with God, was destined to become flooded with His grace. The unction of the great Priest must needs flow down "to the skirts of His clothing."

This opinion involves nothing opposed to existing analogies. The visible world exists for the sake of Him Who made it, and stands to Him in manifold relations of which we as yet know but a few. There is, therefore, no difficulty in the thought that, by the Incarnation of its Creator, it may have been in-

definitely raised, and drawn closer to Him. It interprets between Him and His Intelligent Creation; and the medium of communication may have been rendered fitter for its purpose—a more translucent and musical exponent. A World, once but God's outer Court, may have become His Temple, and may be destined to become His Holy of Holies. The earth was "cursed" for man's sake;"—consequently the whole material Universe is *capable*, at least, of very different degrees of Blessedness, received by it and by it communicated, in connection with some Act, not human but divine. According to this teaching, the Spiritual part of Creation has had its full part in the Gift. In a Vision of the Divine Infant, and the all-blessed Mother, the Incarnation was presented to the reverence of the Angelic Hierarchies, the First-born of the Creative Love. It was a *Revelation* of God in His Infinite Condescension—nay, in the Humiliation of a Hypostatic union not contracted with the Angelic, but with the later, and humbler, human and material Creation; and this Revelation was made to those who had hitherto but known God in the splendours of His Power, and known Him through their own resplendent Faculties irradiated by His light. Those who turned away in Pride from the "enigma," and refused to adore with Supreme Worship their God "made Flesh," fell. Those who stood the test, and received the Revelation, advanced instantaneously into a nearness with God commensurate with their profounder Knowledge

of Him, and with that Love which Obedience alone ripens to its Perfection, and so passed at once into the state of Indefectibility. Thus, then, the Incarnation had three distinct effects, apart from those wholly beyond our ken. To Fallen Man it gave his Restoration—to the Unfallen Angels their Instauration in Glory, endless and complete—to the material Universe, (explored by us or unexplored,) some more sacred and intimate relation with God, which elevated what had before been the Type of His Being into the Sacrament of His Presence, after a sort which we shall only fully comprehend, when we fully comprehend the Resurrection of our own Bodies, and have ourselves become consummated, alike in Body and Soul.*

This view of the Incarnation is referred to in many of the following poems, especially in "Caro factus est," p. 171, and "Ere yet mankind was made," p. 174; and by it were in no small degree suggested the descriptive pieces interspersed among the meditative. These last are an attempt towards a Christian rendering of external nature. Nature, like Art, needs to be spiritualised, unless it is to remain a fortress in the hands of an adverse Power. The visible world is a passive thing, which ever takes its meaning from something above itself. In Pagan times, it drew its interpretation from Pantheism;

* This subject is illustrated with depth and eloquence in Father Ventura's Conferences delivered at Paris, and in the Rev. A. Hewit's "Problems of the Age."—*Catholic Publication House, New York.*

and to Pantheism—nay, to that Idolatry which is the popular application of Pantheism—it has still a secret, though restrained tendency, largely betrayed by modern Imaginative Literature, which is constantly dallying with the Mythic, though it is too cold to adore—*our* Idolatries being chiefly those of "covetousness," lawless affection, and self-love. A World without Divinity, Matter without Soul, is intolerable to the human mind. Yet, on the other hand, there is much in fallen human nature which shrinks from the sublime thought of a Creator, and rests on that of a sheathed Divinity diffused throughout the universe, its life, not its maker. Mere personified elements, the Wood-God and River-Nymph, captivate the fancy and do not over-awe the soul. For a bias so seductive no cure is to be found, save in authentic Christianity. The whole truth, in the long run, holds its own better than the half truth; and minds repelled by the thought of a God who stands afar off, and created the universe but to abandon it to general laws, fling themselves at the feet of a God made Man. When the "Word was made Flesh," a bridge was thrown across that gulf which had else for ever separated the Finite from the Infinite. The same high Truth which brings home to us the doctrine of a Creation, consecrates that Creation, reconstituting it into an Eden meet for an unfallen Adam and an unfallen Eve; nay, exalting it into a heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling-place of the Lamb and of the Bride. It does this,

in part, through symbols and associations founded on the all-cleansing Blood and the all-sanctifying Spirit —symbols and associations the reverse of those in which an Epicurean mythology took delight.

One word on the *form* of this Poem. Religion is not, as has been proved by a few great examples among many failures, incapable of a treatment poetical, as well as metrical; but Religious *Poetry* can never be dialectic or systematic, any more than argumentative. Poetry—an ideal art—is most ideal in its meditative vein. It presents Ideas; but it only suggests their coarser intermediate links, as the early Greek Sculptor but suggested the bridle of his brazen horse. Poetry has habitually a wide-handed Synthesis, and can sharpen itself to a very keen analysis; but its logic is the inner logic of imaginative Thought. It detects the remote analogy; but it is not careful to point out the obvious connection. It elicits Truths; but it forces them on none. It wings them with image and allusion; and bids them fare forth as they may: but they have to fare forth separately; and the complete Poem must appear to consist of but detached fragments, except so far as it possesses the unity of Truth, and the harmony of a common sentiment. By necessity, therefore, this work belongs to the class of serial poems, a form of composition common among our Elizabethan Poets, who derived it from Petrarch and the Italians, and revived with deserved success, by some of our chief modern writers.

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PROLOGUE.

Prologue.

Religion, she that stands sublime
Upon the rock that crowns our globe,
Her feet on all the spoils of time,
With light eternal on her robe,

She, sovereign of the orb she guides,
On Truth's broad sun may root a gaze
That deepens, onward as she rides,
And shrinks not from the fontal blaze:

But they—her daughter Arts—must hide
Within the cleft, content to see
Dim skirts of glory waving wide,
And steps of parting Deity.

'Tis theirs to watch the vision break
In types from Nature's frown or smile,
The legend rise from out the lake,
The relic consecrate the isle.

'Tis theirs to adumbrate and suggest;
To point toward founts of buried lore;
Leaving, in reverence, unexpressed
What Man must know not, yet adore.

For where her court true Wisdom keeps,
'Mid loftier handmaids, one there stands
Dark as the midnight's starry deeps,
A Slave, gem-crowned, from Nubia's sands.

O thou whose light is in thy heart
Love-taught Submission! without thee
Science may soar awhile; but Art
Drifts barren o'er a shoreless sea.

MAY CAROLS.

PART I.

MAY CAROLS.

PART I.

I.

Who feels not, when the Spring once more,
  Stepping o'er Winter's grave forlorn
With winged feet, retreads the shore
  Of widowed Earth, his bosom burn?

As ordered flower succeeds to flower,
  And May the ladder of her sweets
Ascends, advancing hour by hour
  From scale to scale, what heart but beats?

Some Presence veiled, in fields and groves,
  That mingles rapture with remorse;—
Some buried joy beside us moves,
  And thrills the soul with such discourse

As they, perchance, that wondering pair
  Who to Emmaus bent their way,
Hearing, heard not. Like them our prayer
  We make:—"The night is near us . . Stay!"

With Paschal chants the churches ring;
  Their echoes strike along the tombs;
The birds their Hallelujahs sing;
  Each flower with floral incense fumes.

Our long-lost Eden seems restored;
  As on we move with tearful eyes
We feel through all the illumined sward
  Some upward-working Paradise.

II.

Upon Thy face, O God, Thy world
Looks ever up in love and awe;
Thy stars, in circles onward hurled,
Sustain the steadying yoke of Law.

In alternating antiphons
Stream sings to stream and sea to sea;
And moons that set and sinking suns
Obeisance make, O God, to Thee.

The swallow, winter's rage o'erblown,
Again, on warm Spring breezes borne,
Revisiteth her haunts well-known;
The lark is faithful to the morn.

The whirlwind, missioned with its wings
To drown the fleet and fell the tower,
Obeys thee as the bird that sings
Her love-chant in a fleeting shower.

Amid an ordered universe
Man's spirit only dares rebel:—
With light, O God, its darkness pierce!
With love its raging chaos quell!

III.

All but unutterable Name!
  Adorable, yet awful, sound!
Thee can the sinful nations frame
  Save with their foreheads to the ground?

Soul-searching and all-cleansing Fire!
  To see Thy Countenance were to die:
Yet how beyond the bound retire
  Of Thy serene immensity?

Thou mov'st beside us, if the spot
  We change—a noteless, wandering tribe:
The planets of our Life and Thought
  In Thee their little arcs describe.

In the dead calm, at cool of day,
  We hear Thy voice, and turn, and flee:
Thy love outstrips us on our way:
  From Thee, O God, we fly—to Thee.

Ab Angelo Salutata.

IV.

THAT angel's voice is in her ear!
Ah, not alone by Mary heard!
Like light it cleaves that region drear
Where never sang the matin bird.

It thrills the expectant Hades! They,
The pair that once through Eden ranged,
Amid their penal shadows gray
Stand up and smile, this hour avenged!

They see their queenly daughter grasp
The Fruit of Life—her bridal dower:
They see its boughs ascend, and clasp
The sleeping earth with starry bower.

Once more they tread that Eden bound:
Far up—all round—at last, at last—
They see God's mountains city-crowned,
Nor less in every fountain glassed!

Why saw they not, the hour they fell,
Those hills, that city "like a Bride?"
Then too they girt that garden dell,
Predestined Heaven though undescried.

Nihil respondit.

V.

She hid her face from Joseph's blame,
The Spirit's glory-shrouded Bride:
The sword comes next; but first the shame:
Meekly she bore, and nought replied.

In mutual sympathies we live:
The insulted heart forgives, but dies:
To her that wound was sanative,
For life to her was sacrifice.

At us no barbless shaft is thrown
When charged with deeds by us unwrought;
For sins unchallenged, sins unknown,
Worse sins have stained us—act, or thought.

Her humbleness no sin could find
To weep for: yet, that hour, no less
Deeplier the habitual sense was shrined
In her, of her own nothingness.

That hour, foundations deeper yet
God sank in her; that so more high
Her greatness, spire and parapet,
Might rise, and nearer to the sky;

That, wholly over-built by grace,
Nature might vanish, like some isle
In great towers lost—the buried base
Of some surpassing fortress pile.

Sancta Maria.

VI.

Mary! To thee the humble cry.
What seek they? Gifts to Pride unknown.
They seek thy help—to pass thee by:—
They murmur, "Show us but thy Son."

The childlike heart shall enter in;
The virgin soul its God shall see:—
Mother, and maiden pure from sin,
Be thou the guide: the Way is He.

The mystery high of God made Man
Through thee to man is easier made:
Pronounce the consonant who can
Without the softer vowel's aid!

Dei Genitrix.

VII.

I SEE Him: on thy lap He lies
'Mid that Judæan stable's gloom:
O sweet, O awful Sacrifice!
He smiles in sleep, yet knows the doom.

Thou gav'st Him life! But was not this
That Life which knows no parting breath?
Unmeasured Life? unwaning Bliss?
Dread Priestess, lo! thou gav'st Him death!

Beneath the Tree thy Mother stood;
Beneath the Cross thou too shalt stand:—
O Tree of Life! O bleeding Rood!
Thy shadow stretches far its hand.

That God who made the sun and moon
In swaddling bands lies dumb and bound!—
Love's Captive! darker prison soon
Awaits Thee in the garden ground.

He wakens. Paradise looks forth
Beyond the portals of the grave.
Life, life thou gavest!—life to Earth,
Not Him. Thine Infant dies to save.

Virgo Virginum.

VIII.

When from their lurking place the Voice
Of God dragged forth that fallen pair,
Still seemed the garden to rejoice;
The sinless Eden still was fair.

They, they alone, whose light of grace
But late made Paradise look dim,
Stood now, a blot upon its face,
Before their God; nor gazed on Him.

They glanced not up; or they had seen
In that severe, death-dooming eye
Unutterable depths serene
Of sadly-piercing sympathy.

Not them alone that Eye beheld,
But, by their side, that other Twain,
In whom the race whose doom was knelled
Once more should rise; once more should reign.

It saw that Infant crowned with blood;—
And her from whose predestined breast
That Infant ruled the worlds. She stood,
Her foot upon the serpent's crest!

Voice of primeval prophecy!
She who makes glad whatever heart
Adores her Son and Saviour, she
In thee, that hour, possessed a part!

Amor Innocentium.

IX.

Ascending from the convent-grates,
The children mount the woodland vale.
'Tis May-Day Eve; and Hesper waits
To light them, while the western gale

Blows softly on their bannered line:
And, lo! down all the mountain stairs
The shepherd children come to join
The convent children at their prayers.

They meet before Our Lady's fane:
On yonder central rock it stands,
Uplifting, ne'er invoked in vain,
That cross which blesses all the lands.

Before the porch the flowers are flung;
The lamp hangs glittering 'neath the Rood;
The "Maris Stella" hymn is sung;
Their chant each morn to be renewed.

Ah! if a secular muse might dare,
Far off, the children's song to catch;
To echo back, or burthen bear!—
As fitly might she hope to match

The throstle's note as theirs, 'tis true:
Yet, now and then, that borrowed tone,
Like sunbeams flashed on pine or yew,
Might shoot a sweetness through her own!

Adolescentulæ amaverunt te nimis.

X.

"Behold! the wintry rains are past;
The airs of midnight hurt no more:
The young maids love thee. Come at last:
Thou lingerest at the garden-door.

"Blow over all the garden; blow,
Thou wind that breathest of the south,
Through all the alleys winding low,
With dewy wing and honeyed mouth.

"But wheresoe'er thou wanderest, shape
Thy music ever to one Name:—
Thou too, clear stream, to cave and cape
Be-sure thou whisper of the same.

"By every isle and bower of musk
Thy crystal clasps, as on it curls,
We charge thee, breathe it to the dusk;
We charge thee, grave it in thy pearls."

The stream obeyed. That Name he bore
Far out above the moon-lit tide.
The breeze obeyed. He breathed it o'er
The unforgetting pine; and died.

"In Him we have our being."

XI.

THE God Who lives in those bright flowers
That wave and flash from yonder rock,
O children singing 'mid your bowers
In your lives also, pleased to mock

His own serene immensity
With you—in you—to sport and play:—
As ripples on a summer sea
Are ye: unchanged that sea for aye!

Thus much of Truth they knew that feigned,
Of old, their God with Nature one:
Another, loftier Truth remained,
For us, which now they read who run.

Half-Truths are Falsehood's baits—too near
They roam to error's maze of doubt,
And, like some scared, outlying deer,
O'er-leap the limit, in and out.

Such quarry, hunter youths, beware!
That bourne is demon-haunted ground;
And, bone from bone, the demons tear
The man who steps beyond its bound.

XII.

THE infant year with infant freak,
Intent to dazzle and surprise,
Played with us long at hide and seek;
Turned on us now, now veiled her eyes.

Between the pines forever green,
And boughs by April half attired,
She glanced; then sang, once more unseen,
"The unbeheld is more desired."

With footsteps vague, and hard to trace,
She crept from whitening bower to bower;
Now bent from heaven her golden face,
Now veiled her radiance in a shower.

Like genial hopes, and thoughts devout
That touch some sceptic soul forlorn,
And herald clearer faith, and rout
The night and antedate the morn,

Her gifts. But thou, all-beauteous May,
Art come at last. Oh! with thee bring
Hearts pure as thine with thee to play,
And own the consummated spring.

To hands by deeds unblest defiled
In vain the whiteness of thy thorn:
Proud souls, where lurks no more the child,
For them thy violet is unborn.

For breasts that know nor joy nor hope
Thy songstress sings an idle strain:
Thy golden-domed laburnums drop
O'er loveless hearts their bowers in vain.

Fest. Natibitatis.

XIII.

Primeval night had repossessed
Her empire in the fields of space;
Calm lay the kine on earth's dark breast;
The earth lay calm in heaven's embrace.

That hour, where shepherds kept their flocks,
From God a glory sudden fell:
The splendour smote the trees and rocks,
And lay, like dew, along the dell.

God's Angel close beside them stood:
"Fear nought," that Angel said, and then,
"Behold, I bring you tidings good:
The Saviour Christ is born to men."

And straightway round him myriads sang
Loud song, again, and yet again,
Till all the hollow valley rang,
"Glory to God, and peace to men."

The shepherds went, and, wondering, eyed
In Bethlehem born, the heavenly Stranger:
Mary and Joseph knelt beside;
The Babe was cradled in the manger.

Thus in the violet-scented grove,
The May breeze murmuring softly by them,
The children sang. Who Mary love
The long year through have Christmas nigh them!

Mater Christi.

XIV.

Daily beneath His mother's eyes
Her Lamb matured His lowliness:
'Twas hers the lovely Sacrifice
With fillet and with flower to dress.

Beside His little cross He knelt;
With human-heavenly lips He prayed:
His Will within her will she felt;
And yet His Will her will obeyed.

Gethsemané! when day is done
Thy flowers with falling dews are wet:
Her tears fell never; for the sun
Those tears that brightened never set.

The house was silent as that shrine
The priest but entered once a year.
There shone His emblem. Light Divine!
Thy presence and Thy power were here!

Mater Christi.

XV.

He willed to lack; He willed to bear;
He willed by suffering to be schooled;
He willed the chains of flesh to wear:
Yet from her arms the worlds He ruled.

As tapers 'mid the noontide glow
With merged yet separate radiance burn,
With human taste and touch, even so,
The things He knew He willed to learn.

He sat beside the lowly door:
His homeless eyes appeared to trace
In evening skies remembered lore,
And shadows of His Father's face.

One only knew Him. She alone
Who nightly to His cradle crept,
And lying like the moonbeam prone,
Worshipped her Maker as He slept.

Mater Creatoris.

XVI.

Bud forth a Saviour, Earth! fulfil
  Thy first of functions, ever new!
Balm-dropping heaven, for aye distil
  Thy grace like manna or like dew!

"To us, this day, a Child is born."
  Heaven knows not mere historic facts:—
Celestial mysteries, night and morn,
  Live on in ever-present Acts.

Calvary's dread Victim in the skies
  On God's great altar rests even now:
The Pentecostal glory lies
  For ever round the Church's brow.

From Son and Father, He, the Lord
  Of Love and Life, proceeds alway:
Upon the first creative word
  Creation, trembling, hangs for aye.

Nor less ineffably renewed
  Than when on earth the tie began,
Is that mysterious Motherhood
  Which re-creates the worlds and man.

Mater Salvatoris.

XVII.

O Heart with His in just accord!
O Soul His echo, tone for tone!
O Spirit that heard, and kept His word!
O Countenance moulded like His own!

Behold, she seemed on Earth to dwell;
But, hid in light, she ever sat
Beneath the Throne ineffable,
Chanting her clear Magnificat.

Fed from the boundless heart of God,
The joy within her rose more high
And all her being overflowed,
Until that Hour decreed drew nigh.

Then, then, there crept her spirit o'er
The shadow of that pain world-wide
Whereof her Son the substance bore:—
Him offering, half in Him she died;

Standing, like that strange Moon, whereon
The mask of Earth lies dim and dead,
An orb of glory, shadow-strewn,
Yet girdled with a luminous thread.

Mater Dei.

XVIII.

How many a lonely hermit maid
Hath brightened like a dawn-touched isle
When—on her breast in vision laid—
That Babe hath lit her with His smile!

How many an aged Saint hath felt,
So graced, a second spring renew
Her wintry breast; with Anna knelt,
And trembled like the matin dew!

How oft th' unbending monk, no thrall
In youth of mortal smiles or tears,
Hath felt that Infant's touch through all
The armour of his hundred years!

But Mary's was no transient bliss;
Nor hers a vision's phantom gleam:
The hourly need, the voice, the kiss—
That Child was her's! 'twas not a dream!

At morning her's, and when the sheen
Of moonrise crept the cliffs along;
In silence hers, and hers between
The pulses of the night-bird's song.

And as the Child, the love. Its growth
Was, hour by hour, a growth in grace:
That Child was God; and love for both
Advanced perforce with equal pace.

Gaudium Angelorum.

XIX.

"He looked on her humility—"
Ah humbler thrice that breast was made
When Jesus watched His mother's eye,
When God each God-born wish obeyed!

In her with seraph seraph strove,
And each the other's purpose crost:
And now 'twas Reverence, now 'twas Love
The peaceful strife that won or lost.

Now to that Infant she extends
Those hands that mutely say "mine own!"
Now shrinks abashed, or swerves and bends
As bends a willow backward blown.

And oftimes, like a roseleaf caught
By eddying airs from fairy land,
The kiss a sleeping brow that sought
Descends upon the unsceptred hand!

O tenderest awe whose sweet excess
Had ended in a fond despair
Had not the all-pitying helplessness
Constrained the boldness of her care!

O holiest strife! The angelic hosts
That watched it hid their dazzled eyes,
And lingered from the heavenly coasts
To bless that heavenlier Paradise!

Stabat Mater.

XX.

SHE stood: she sank not. Slowly fell
Adown the Cross the atoning blood.
In agony ineffable
She offered still His own to God.

No pang of His her bosom spared;
She felt in Him its several power:
But she in heart His Priesthood shared:
She offered Sacrifice that hour.

"Behold thy Son!" Ah, last bequest!
It breathed His last farewell! The sword
Predicted pierced that hour her breast.
She stood: she answered not a word.

His own in John He gave. She wore
Thenceforth the Mother-crown of Earth.
O Eve! thy sentence too she bore;
Like thee in sorrow she brought forth.

Mater Dolorosa.

XXI.

From her He passed; yet still with her
The endless thought of Him found rest;
A sad but sacred branch of myrrh
For ever folded in her breast.

A Boreal winter void of light—
So seemed her widowed days forlorn:
She slept; but in her breast all night
Her heart lay waking till the morn.

Sad flowers on Calvary that grew;—
Sad fruits that ripened from the Cross;
These were the only joys she knew:
Yet all but these she counted loss.

Love strong as Death! She lived through thee
That mystic life whose every breath
From Life's low harpstring amorously
Draws out the sweetened name of Death.

Love stronger far than Death or Life!
Thy martyrdom was o'er at last.
Her eyelids drooped; and without strife
To Him she loved her spirit passed.

Regina Martyrum.

XXII.

That tie, the closest ever twined,
That linked a creature with her God,
All ties of man in one combined
When by His Cross that creature stood.

In both, one Will all Wishes quelled:
On one great Sire were fixed their eyes:
From sister hearts the death-stream welled:—
That dread Consent was Sacrifice.

In death her Spouse, her Son in life,
Her wedding-garment was His Blood:
It clasped her close—enough a wife
To wear the crown of Widowhood.

O Love! alone thy topmost height
They tread, who stand—thy clouds above—
Where *all* the rock-hewn paths unite
That branch from God, and lead to love!

Beati qui audiunt verbum Dei.

XXIII.

When from the crowd that voice was raised
That blessed the Mother of the Lord,
Not her the Son who loved her praised,
But all who heard, and kept His word.

O answer meet! to her how dear,
To her too great her crown to boast!
The meek were glad that praise to hear:
The meekest, loftiest, joyed the most.

Above her soul's pure mirror crept
No mist: no doubt within her stirred:
She asked not, "who His words hath kept
Like her, the mother of the Word?"

Her tender heart rejoiced to think
That all who say, "Thy will be mine,"
Without, or with the external link,
In heart bring forth the Babe divine.

Chief of the Prophets John might be,
Yet, but for that his happier place
In Jesus' kingdom, less than he
The least one in the realm of grace.

The mother of Incarnate God
Some Prophet's mother *seemed*, alone:—
His hour not yet was come: abroad
To noise her fame had noised his own.

Deus Absconditus.

XXIV.

He was no conqueror borne abroad
On all the fiery winds of fame
That over-strides a world o'er-awed
In ruin-heaps to write—a Name.

No Act triumphant crushed the foe:
No word of power redeemed the thrall:
By Suffering He prevailed, that so
His Father might be all in all.

His Godhead veiled from mortal eye
Shewed forth that Father's Godhead still,
As calm seas mirror starry skies
Because themselves invisible.

Thus Mary in the Son was hid:—
Her Motherhood her only boast,
She nothing said, she nothing did:
Her light in His was merged and lost.

Mater Admirabilis.

XXV.

O MOTHER-MAID! to none save thee
Belongs in full a Parent's name;
So fruitful thy Virginity,
Thy Motherhood so pure from blame!

All other parents, what are they?
Thy types. In them thou stood'st rehearsed,
(As they in bird, and bud, and spray).
Thine Antitype? The Eternal First!

Prime Parent He: and next Him thou!
O'ershadowed by the Father's Might,
Thy "Fiat" was thy bridal vow:
Thine offspring He, the "Light from Light."

Her Son Thou wert: her Son Thou art,
O Christ! Her substance fed Thy growth:
Alone, she shaped Thee in her heart—
Thy Mother and Thy Father both!

Mater Amabilis.

XXVI.

Mother of Love! Thy love to Him
Cherub and seraph can but guess:—
A mother sees its image dim
In her own breathless tenderness.

That infant touch none else could feel
Vibrates like light through all her sense:
Far off she hears his cry: her zeal
With lions fights in his defence.

Unmarked his youth goes by: his hair
Still smooths she down, still strokes apart:
The first white thread that meets her there
Glides, like a dagger, through her heart.

Men praise him: on her matron cheek
There dawns once more a maiden red.
Of war, of battle-fields they speak:
She sees once more his father dead.

In sickness—half in sleep—she hears
His foot, ere yet that foot is nigh:
Wakes with a smile; and scarcely fears,
If he but clasp her hand, to die.

Festum Maternitatis.

XXVII.

To lowliest creatures God permits
  Maternal Love, an instinct blind
Weakness with help that softly knits,
  Benignant Nature's "Law of Kind."

The human mother's happier nest,
  The bird's with wing and questing bill,
Are both but Nature's; and the best
  That earth can yield is earthly still.

But Mary! Heavenly is her Child,
  And heavenly her Maternal Love:
To her it comes, the undefiled,
  Comes, like her Infant, from above.

It is the God-Man that she loves;
  Her Motherhood's sublimest part
Is this, with Him the world that moves
  To share that prime Parental Heart!

Mater Filii.

XXVIII.

Others, the hours of youth gone by,
A mother's hearth and home forsake;
And, with the need, the filial tie
Relaxes, though it does not break.

But Thou wert born to be a Son.
God's Son in heaven, Thy will was this,
To pass the chain of Sonship on,
And bind in one whatever is.

Thou cam'st the *Son* of Man to be,
That so Thy brethren too might bear
Adoptive Sonship, and with Thee
Thy Sire's eternal kingdom share.

Transcendently the Son Thou art:
In this mysterious bond entwine,
As in a single, two-celled heart,
Thy natures, human and divine.

Mater Divinæ Gratiæ.

XXIX.

"THEY have no wine." The tender guest
Was grieved their feast should lack for aught.
He seemed to slight her mute request:
Not less the grace she wished He wrought.

O great in Love! O full of Grace
That winds in thee, a river broad,
From Christ, with heaven-reflecting face,
Gladdening the City of thy God:—

Be this thy gift: that man henceforth
No more should creep through life content
(Draining the springs impure of earth)
With life's material element.

Let sacraments to sense succeed:
Let nought be winning, nought be good
Which fails of Him to speak, and bleed
Once more with His all-cleansing blood!

Mater Divinæ Gratiæ.

XXX.

The gifts a mother showers each day
Upon her softly-clamorous brood:
The gifts they value but for play,—
The graver gifts of clothes and food,—

Whence come they but from him who sows
With harder hand, and reaps, the soil;
The merit of his labouring brows,
The guerdon of his manly toil?

From Him the Grace: through her it stands
Adjusted, meted, and applied;
And ever, passing through her hands,
Enriched it seems, and beautified.

Love's mirror doubles Love's caress:
Love's echo to Love's voice is true:—
Their Sire the children love not less
Because they clasp a Mother too.

XXXI.

When April's sudden sunset cold
  Through half-clothed boughs with watery sheen
Bursts on the high, new-cowslipped wold,
  And bathes a world half gold half green,

Then shakes the illuminated air
  With din of birds; the vales far down
Grow phosphorescent here and there;
  Forth flash the turrets of the town;

Along the sky thin vapours scud;
  Bright zephyrs curl the choral main;
The wild ebullience of the blood
  Rings joy-bells in the heart and brain:

Yet in that music discords mix;
  The unbalanced lights like meteors play;
And, tired of splendours that perplex,
  The dazzled spirit sighs for May.

Gens non Sancta.

XXXII.

I TOILED along the public path:
  Loud rang the booths with knave and clown:
Now laughter peals, now cries of wrath
  Assailed the suburb from the town.

Pleasure, the kennel Circe, brimmed
  Her cup for him that passed. Hard by
Sabbathless labour, dust-begrimmed
  Alternated the curse and sigh.

"Alas," I wept, "no God is here!
  The World, the Flesh, rule here confest:"
I heard a voice; an Angel near
  On sailed; an altar touched his breast.

He placed it by me, and I knelt;
  Clamour and shout and dust were gone:
I prayed, and in my prayer I felt
  The peace of God, and heard, "walk on:—

"Walk on: the Lands this hour that sleep
  A sleep of storm, shall wake to pray,
And, praying, rest;—her Feasts shall keep;—
  Tomorrow is the Assumption Day."

XXXIII.

As children when, with heavy tread,
Men sad of face, unseen before,
Have borne away their mother dead—
So stand the nations thine no more.

Years pass: Self-Will and Passion strike
Their roots more deeply day by day;
Old kinsmen sigh; and "how unlike"
Is all the tender neighbours say:

And yet at moments, like a dream,
A mother's image o'er them flits:
Like her's their eyes a moment beam;
The voice grows soft: the brow unknits:

Such, Mary, are the realms once thine,
That know no more thy golden reign:
Hold forth from heaven thy Babe divine!
O make thine orphans thine again!

Mariæ Cliens.

XXXIV.

A LITTLE longer on the earth
That aged creature's eyes repose
(Though half their light and all their mirth
Are gone); and then for ever close.

She thinks that something done long since
Ill pleases God:—or why should He
So long delay to take her hence
Who waits His will so lovingly?

Whene'er she hears the church-bells toll,
She lifts her head, though not her eyes,
With wrinkled hands, but youthful soul,
Counting her lip-worn rosaries.

And many times the weight of years
Falls from her in her waking dreams:
A child her mother's voice she hears:
To tend her father's steps she seems.

Once more she hears the whispering rains
On flowers and paths her girlhood trod;
And of things present nought remains
Save the abiding sense of God.

Mary! make smooth her downward way!
Not dearer to the young thou art
Than her. Make glad her latest May;
And hold her, dying, on thy heart.

Fest. Visitationis.

XXXV.

The hilly region crossed with haste,
Its last dark ridge discerned no more,
Bright as the bow that spans a waste
She stood beside her Cousin's door;

And spake:—that greeting came from God!
Filled with the Spirit from on high
Sublime the aged Mother stood,
And cried aloud in prophecy,—

"Soon as thy voice had touched mine ears
The child in childless age conceived,
Leaped up for joy! Throughout all years
Blessed the woman who believed."

Type of Electing Love! 'tis thine
To sound God's greeting from the skies!
Thou speak'st, and Faith, a babe divine,
Leaps up thy Babe to recognize.

Within our hearts the second birth
Exults, though blind as yet and dumb.
The child of Grace his hands puts forth,
And prophesies of things to come.

XXXVI.

Not yet, not yet! the Season sings
Not of fruition yet, but hope;
Still holds aloft, like balanced wings,
Her scales, and lets not either drop.

The white ash, last year's skeleton,
Still glares, uncheered by leaf or shoot,
'Gainst azure heavens, and joy hath none
In that pure primrose at her foot.

Yet Nature's virginal suspense
Is not forgetfulness nor sloth:
Where'er we wander, soul and sense
Discern a blindly working growth.

Her throne once more the daisy takes,
That white star of our dusky earth;
And the sky-cloistered lark down-shakes
Her passion of seraphic mirth.

'Twixt barren hills and clear cold skies
She weaves, ascending high and higher,
Songs florid as those traceries
Which took, of old, their name from fire.

Sing! thou that need'st no ardent clime
To sun the sweetness from thy breast;
And teach us those delights sublime
Wherein ascetic spirits rest!

Fest. Nativitatis B. V. M.

XXXVII.

When thou wert born the murmuring world
Rolled on, nor dreamed of things to be,
From joy to sorrow madly whirled;—
Despair disguised in revelry.

A princess thou of David's line;
The mother of the Prince of Peace;
That hour no royal pomps were thine:
The earth alone her boon increase

Before thee poured. September rolled
Down all the vine-clad Syrian slopes
Her robes of purple and of gold;
And birds sang loud from olive tops.

Perhaps old foes, they knew not why,
Relented. From a fount long sealed
Tears rose, perhaps, to Pity's eye:
Love-harvests crowned the barren field.

The respirations of the year,
At least, grew soft. O'er valleys wide
Pine-roughened crags again shone clear;
And the great Temple, far descried,

To watchers, watching long in vain,
To patriots grey, in bondage nursed,
Flashed back their hope—"The Second Fane
In glory shall surpass the First!"

XXXVIII.

THE moon, ascending o'er a mass
Of tangled yew and sable pine,
What sees she in yon watery glass?
A tearful countenance divine.

Far down, the winding hills between,
A sea of vapour bends for miles,
Unmoving. Here and there, dim-seen,
The knolls above it rise like isles.

The tall rock glimmers, spectre-white;
The cedar in its sleep is stirred;
At times the bat divides the night;
At times the far-off flood is heard.

Above, that shining blue!—below,
That shining mist! O, not more pure
Midwinter's landscape, robed in snow,
And fringed with frosty garniture.

The fragrance of the advancing year—
That, that assures us it is May.
Ah, tell me! in the heavenlier sphere
Must all of earth have passed away?

Exaltabit Humiles.

XXXIX.

The Chief of Creatures lived unknown,
Sharing her Maker's sacred cloud,
Like some fair headland flower-bestrewn
That sleeps within its sea-born shroud.

The Brethren sought precedence: Christ
To them gave titles. He, their God—
For Him "the Son of man" sufficed:
The hidden way with Him she trod.

She died: the idols sank, and they
Those four great heresies, whose pride
Successive blurred the fount of day,
Her Son's Divinity denied:

As God—as Man—secure He reigned:—
Smit by His beam shone out her crown,
And all that Saintly Court arraigned
By hero-worship's knave or clown.

Humility was crowned, though late:
To earth the pagan greatness fell:
And on their thrones the meek ones sate
"Judging the tribes of Israel."

Nazareth.

XL.

Before the Saviour's eyes unscaled
The Beatific Vision stood:—
If God from her that splendour veiled
Awhile, in Him she gazed on God.

The eternal Spirit o'er them hung:
The Eternal Father moved beside:
With hands forth-held the Angelic throng
Worshipped their Maker far descried.

Yet neither He who said of yore
"Let there be light"—and all was day—
Nor she that, still a creature, wore,
Creation's crown, and wears for aye,

To casual gazers wondrous seemed:
The wanderer sat beside their door,
Partook their broken bread, and deemed
The donors kindly—nothing more.

In Eden thus that primal Pair,
Ere sin had marred their first estate,
Sat side by side in silent prayer,
Their earliest sunset fronting, sat;

And now the lion, now the pard,
Piercing the Cassia bower drew nigh;
Fixed on the twain a mute regard,
Half pleased, half vacant—then passed by.

"The secret of God is with them that fear Him."

XLI.

Flower of the darkness, that unseen
With fragrance fill'st the vernal grove,
Where hid'st thou? 'Mid the grasses green,
Or boughs that bar the blue above?

Thou bird that, darkling, sing'st a song
That shook the bowers of Paradise,
Thou too art hid thy leaves among;
Thou sing'st unseen of mortal eyes.

Of her thou sing'st whose every breath
Sweetens a world too base to heed;—
Of Him, death's conqueror, that from death
Alone would take the crown decreed.

Thou sing'st that secret gifts are best;
That only like to God are they
Who keep God's secret in their breast,
And hide, as stars are hid by day.

Legenda.

XLII.

O WEARIED Souls by earth beguiled,
Round whom the world's enthralments close,
Look back on her, that three-years' child,
Who first the life conventual chose!

A nun-like veil was o'er her thrown;
Her locks by fillet-bands made fast,
Swiftly she climbed the steps of stone;
Into the Temple swiftly passed.

Not once she paused her breath to take;
Not once cast back a homeward look:
As longs the hart his thirst to slake,
When noontide rages, in the brook,

So longed that Child to live for God;
So pined, from earth's enthralments free,
To bathe her wholly in the flood
Of God's abysmal purity!

Anna and Joachim from far
Their eyes on that white vision raised;
And when, like caverned foam or star
Cloud-hid, she vanished, still they gazed.

Fest. Presentationis.

XLIII.

TWELVE years had passed, and, still a child,
In brightness of the unblemished face,
Once more she scaled those steps, and smiled
On Him who slept in her embrace.

As in she passed there fell a calm
On all: each bosom slowly rose
Like the long branches of the palm
When under them the south wind blows.

The scribe forgot his wordy lore;
The chanted psalm was heard far off;
Hushed was the clash of golden ore;
And hushed the Sadducean scoff.

Type of the Church, the gift was thine!
'Twas thine to offer first, that hour,
Thy Son—the Sacrifice Divine,
The Church's everlasting dower!

Great Priestess! round that aureoled brow
Which cloud or shadow ne'er had crossed,
Began there not thenceforth to grow
A milder dawn of Pentecost?

XLIV.

THE sunless day is sweeter yet
Than when the golden sun-showers danced
On bower new-glazed or rivulet;
And Spring her banners first advanced.

By wind unshaken hang in dream
The wind-flowers o'er their dark green lair;
And those thin poppy cups that seem
Not bodied forms, but woven of air.

Nor bird is heard, nor insect flits:
A tear-drop glittering on her cheek,
Composed but shadowed, Nature sits—
Yon primrose not more staid and meek.

The light of pensive hope unquenched
On those pathetic brows and eyes,
She sits, by silver dew-showers drenched
Through which the chill spring-odours rise.

Was e'er on human countenance shed
So sweet a sadness? Once: no more.
Then when his charge the Patriarch led
Dream-warned to Egypt's distant shore.

Down on her Infant Mary gazed;
Her face the angels marked with awe;
Yet 'neath its dimness, undisplaced,
Looked forth that smile the Magians saw.

Fest. Epiphaniæ.

XLV.

A VEIL is on the face of Truth:
She prophesies behind a cloud;
She ministers, in robes of ruth,
Nocturnal rites, and disallowed.

Eleusis hints, but dares not speak;
The Orphic minstrelsies are dumb;
Lost are the Sibyl's books, and weak
Earth's olden faith in Him to come.

But ah, but ah, that Orient Star!
On straw-roofed shed and large-eyed kine
It flashes, guiding from afar
The Magians' long-linked camel-line!

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh they bring—
Love, Worship, Life severe and hard:
Their symbol gifts the Infant King
Accepts; and Truth is their reward.

Rejoice, O Sion, for thy night
Is past: the Lord, thy Light, is born.
The Gentiles shall behold thy light;
The kings walk forward in thy morn.

Fest. Epiphaniæ.

XLVI.

They leave the land of gems and gold,
The shining portals of the East;
For Him, "the Woman's Seed" foretold,
They leave the revel and the feast.

To earth their sceptres they have cast,
And crowns by Kings ancestral worn;
They track the lonely Syrian waste;
They kneel before the Babe new-born.

Oh, happy eyes that saw Him first!
Oh, happy lips that kissed His feet!
Earth slakes at last her ancient thirst;
With Eden's joy her pulses beat.

True Kings are those who thus forsake
Their kingdoms for the Eternal King—
Serpent! her foot is on thy neck!
Herod! thou writh'st, but canst not sting!

He, He is King, and He alone,
Who lifts that Infant hand to bless;
Who makes His Mother's knee His Throne,
Yet rules the starry wilderness.

"Teste David cum Sibylla."

XLVII.

O THOU of amplest brow, and eye,
  Resplendent most with piercing beam,
Prime Teacher of antiquity
  That through thy shadowy Academe

Didst walk, the boast of Grecian years,
  Of man conversing, and the Soul,
Until the music of the spheres
  Around thy listeners seemed to roll;—

Thy theme was still the unsensuous Mind
  That moulds and makes the worlds of sense,
The Truth in fleeting forms enshrined,
  Its own all-conquering evidence.

Olympian fancies, winged with speech,
  Descending, lit that arduous theme
Like Pindan swans, each following each,
  Adown some forest-darkened stream.

Ilyssus 'mid the reeds withheld
  His wave to list a statelier ode
Than ever in that holy eld
  From Sophoclean chorus flowed.

Man, man thou sang'st in strain heaven-taught,
  Thy State's Exemplar, Type, and Plan,
Man, born of God's eternal Thought—
  Ah, hadst thou heard of God made man!

Plato.

XLVIII.

He looked on the transcendent light
And, by the greatness of the fall,
Measuring the unfallen Spirit's height,
That Spirit deemed the body's thrall.

He knew the light, but not the love,
The sin, but not that Cross of shame
Which raised us sinless spheres above!
Perhaps in death that knowledge came—

In death that vision o'er him stood,
Which all atoned, and all sufficed,
That vision of Incarnate God,
The Mother-maid, the Infant Christ!

Perhaps, where'er the heart is pure,
In Gentile or in Christian lands,
Despite dim clouds of faith obscure
By dying beds that vision stands,

To ripen in a moment's space
Truth's harvest, slumbering long in seed,
And fit to meet the Judge's face
With love in fear the Spirit freed!

Legenda.

XLIX.

As, flying Herod, southward went
That Child and Mother, unamazed,
Into Egyptian banishment,
The weeders left their work, and gazed.

The bright One spake to them, and said,
"When Herod's messengers demand,
Passed not the Infant, Herod's dread,—
Passed not the Infant through your land?

"Then shall ye answer make, and say,
Behold, since first the corn was green
No little Infant passed this way;
No little Infant we have seen."

Earth heard; nor missed the Maid's intent—
As on the Flower of Eden passed
With Eden swiftness up she sent
A sun-browned harvest ripening fast.

By simplest words and sinless wheat
The messengers rode back beguiled;
And by that truthfullest deceit
Which saved the little new-born Child!

Cæli enarrant.

L.

"The everlasting hills present
God's steadfastness to mortal ken:
His ways the trackless firmament:
The deep His counsels hid from men."

What follows? *All* that meets our eyes,
Now dimmed by life's distempered dream,
Is Revelation in disguise;—
It shrouds, yet shows, the One supreme!

Throughout all worlds there liveth nought
But lived, unmade, unchangeable,
For aye in God's creative Thought
Which cast Creation's glistening shell.

Him first, Him most, His works express:
But Nature's myriad-minded plan
Hath lesser meanings; and the less
Charm most the petty mind of man.

Poor captive of a sensuous heart,
That mind no longer by the whole
Interprets Nature's meaner part—
We live in suburbs of the soul.

O Death! fling back the gates of sense,
That man, redeemed from thraldom base,
With glorified intelligence
At last may see his Maker's Face!

Then type to antetype shall yield:
Then Truth no more shall shew reversed:—
The golden side of nature's shield
Shall smite our vision, as at first,

When God His creatures bade to pass
Beneath their master's eye, and he,
Fresh from the Godhead, as through glass
Discerned in each its mystery;

Descried its supernatural law;
Inferred its place in nature's frame,
And, in the tongue of Gods, with awe
Assigned to each its destined name.

MAY CAROLS.

PART II.

PART II.

Conservabat in Corde.

I.

As every change of April sky
  Is imaged in the unchangeful brook,
Her meditative memory
  Mirrored His every deed and look.

As suns through summer ether rolled
  Mature each growth the spring has wrought,
Her love's calm solstice turned to gold
  The harvests of quiescent thought.

Her soul was as a vase, and shone
  Illumed but with the interior ray;
Her Maker's finger wrote thereon
  A mystic Bible new each day.

Deep Heart! In all His sevenfold might
  The Paraclete with thee abode,
And, sacramented there in light,
  Bare witness of the things of God.

Ascensio Domini.

II.

Rejoice, O Earth, thy crown is won!
Rejoice, rejoice, ye heavenly host!
And thou, the Mother of the Son,
Rejoice the first; rejoice the most!

Who captive led captivity—
From Hades' void circumference
Who raised the Patriarch Band on high,
There rules, and sends us graces thence.

Rejoice, glad Earth, o'er winter's grave
With altars wreathed and clarions blown;
Rejoice, thou Race He died to save,
That shar'st this hour His Kingly Throne!

Rejoice, O Mary! thou that long
Didst lean thy breast upon the sword—
Sad nightingale, the Spirit's song
That sang'st all night! He reigns, restored!

Rejoice! He goes, the Paraclete
To send! Rejoice! He reigns on high!
The sword lies broken at thy feet—
His triumph is thy victory!

The First Dolour.

(Gladio Transfixa.)

III.

To be the mother of her Lord—
What means it? This, a bleeding heart!
The pang that woke at Simeon's word
Worked inward, never to depart.

The dreadful might of Sin she knew
As Innocence alone can know:
O'er her its deadliest gloom it threw
As shades lie darkest on the snow.

Yet o'er her Sorrow's depth no storm
Of earth's rebellious passion rolled:
So sleeps some lake no gusts deform
High on the dark hills' craggy fold.

In that still glass the unmeasured cliff,
With all its scars and clouds is shewn:
And, mellowed in that Mother's grief,
At times, O Christ, we catch Thine own!

Ascensio Domini.

IV.

I TAKE this reed—I know the hand
That wields it must ere long be dust—
And write, upon the fleeting sand
Each wind can shake, the words, "I trust."

And if that sand one day was stone,
And stood in courses near the sky,
For towers by earthquake overthrown,
Or mouldering piecemeal, what care I?

Things earthly perish: life to death
And death to life in turn succeeds:
The spirit never perisheth:
The chrysalis its Psyche breeds.

True life alone is that which soars
To Him who triumphed o'er the grave:
With Him, on life's eternal shores,
I trust one day a part to have.

Ah, hark! above the springing corn
That chime; in every breeze it swells!
Ye bells that wake the Ascension morn,
Ye give us back our Paschal bells!

The Kindly Transience.

V.

"LIKE flowers," they tell us, "Life must fade!"
Ah flower-faced Friend! if flowers must die
Immortal sweets of these are made:
Thus Time bequeaths Eternity.

"Life is a fleeting shade!" What then?
The Substance doth the Shadow cast:
Essential Life, it recks not when,
Shall crown this seeming Life at last.

Thus, while May breezes whirling caught
Dead leaves, poor spoils of winter gone,
Half-Truths, deciduous spoils of Thought,
Their clothing from on high put on:

And better far it seemed to plight
To earth a transient troth and trust
Than with corruption wed, and blight
The Spirit's hope with deathless dust.

VI.

Stronger and steadier every hour
The pulses of the season's glee,
As higher climbs that vernal Power
Which rules the purple revelry.

Trees, that from winter's grey eclipse
Of late but pushed their topmost plume,
Or felt with green-touched finger-tips
For spring, their perfect robes assume.

Like one that reads, not one that spells,
The unvarying rivulet onward runs:
And bird to bird, from leafier cells,
Sends forth more leisurely response.

Through the gorse covert bounds the deer:—
The gorse, whose latest splendours won
Make all the fulgent wolds appear
Bright as the pastures of the sun.

A balmier zephyr curls the wave;
More purple flames o'er ocean dance;
And the white breaker by the cave,
Falls with more cadenced resonance;

While, vague no more, the mountains stand
With quivering line or hazy hue;
But drawn with finer, firmer hand,
And settling into deeper blue.

Speculum Justitiæ.

VII.

Not in Himself the Eternal Word
Lay hid upon Creation's day:
His Loveliness abroad He poured
On all the worlds, and pours for aye.

Not in Himself the Incarnate Son,
In whom Man's race is born again,
His glory hides. The victory won,
He rose to send His "Gifts on Men."

In sacraments—His dread behests;
In Providence; in granted prayer;
Before the time He manifests
His Presence, far as man may bear.

He shines not from a vault of gloom;
The horizon vast His splendour paints:
The sphere of Souls His beams illume;
His light is glorious in His Saints.

He shines upon His Church—that Moon
Who, in the watches of the night,
Transmits to Earth the entrusted boon;
A sister orb of sacred light.

And thou, pure mirror of His grace!—
As sun reflected in a sea—
So, Mary, feeblest eyes the face
Of Him thou lovest discern in thee.

Auxilium Christianorum.

VIII.

Not for herself does Mary hold
The Mother-Crown, the Queenly Throne:—
The loftiest in the Saviour's Fold,
The least possesses of her own!

Pure thoughts that make to God their quest
With her find footing o'er the clouds,
Like those sea-crossing birds that rest
A moment on the sighing shrouds.

In her our hearts, no longer nursed
On dust, for spiritual beauty yearn;
From her our instincts, as at first,
An upward gravitation learn.

Through her draw nigh the things remote:
For in true love's supernal sphere
No more round self the affections float—
More near to God, to man more near.

In her, the weary warfare past,
The port attained, the exile o'er,
We see the Church's barque at last
Close-anchored on the eternal shore!

Ab Eterno Ordinata.

IX.

Eternal Beauty, ere the spheres
Had rolled from out the gulfs of night,
Sparkled, through all the unnumbered years,
Before the Eternal Father's sight.

Truth's solemn reflex—not a Dream—
Self-radiant Wisdom's smile unpriced—
Before His eyes it hung—a gleam
Flashed from the eternal Thought of Christ.

It hung, the unbodied antitype
Of all Creation shapes and sings—
That finite world which Time makes ripe—
The Uncreated Light enrings.

Star-like within the depths serene
Of that still vision, Mary, thou
With Him, thy Son, of God wert seen
Millenniums ere the lucid brow

Of Eve o'er Eden founts had bent,—
Millenniums ere that second Pair
With dust the hopes of man had blent,
And stained the brightness once so fair.

Elect of Creatures! Man in thee
Beholds that primal Beauty yet,—
Sees all that Man was formed to be,—
Sees all that Man can ne'er forget!

X.

THREE worlds there are:—the first of Sense—
That sensuous earth which round us lies;
The next of Faith's Intelligence;
The third of Glory, in the skies.

The first is palpable, but base;
The second heavenly, but obscure;
The third is star-like in the face—
But ah! remote that world as pure!

Yet, glancing through our misty clime,
Some sparkles from that loftier sphere
Make way to earth;—then most what time
The annual spring-flowers re-appear.

Amid the coarser needs of earth
All shapes of brightness, what are they
But wanderers, exiled from their birth,
Or pledges of a happier day?

Yea, what is Beauty, judged aright,
But some surpassing, transient gleam;
Some smile from heaven, in waves of light,
Rippling o'er life's distempered dream?

Or broken memories of that bliss
Which rushed through first-born Nature's blood
When He who ever was, and is,
Looked down, and saw that all was good?

XI.

Alas! not only loveliest eyes,
And brows with lordliest lustre bright,
But Nature's self—her woods and skies—
The credulous heart can cheat or blight.

And why? Because the sin of man
'Twixt Fair and Good has made divorce;
And stained, since Evil first began,
That stream so heavenly at its source.

O perishable vales and groves!
Your master was not made for you;
Ye are but creatures: human loves
Are to the great Creator due.

And yet, through Nature's symbols dim,
There are with keener sight that pierce
The outward husk, and reach to Him
Whose garment is the universe.

For this to earth the Saviour came
In flesh; in part for this He died;
That man might have, in soul and frame,
No faculty unsanctified.

That Fancy's self—so prompt to lead
Through paths disastrous or defiled—
Upon the Tree of Life might feed;
And Sense with Soul be reconciled.

Idolatria.

XII.

THE fancy of an age gone by,
When Fancy's self to earth declined,
Still thirsting for Divinity,
Yet still, through sense, to Godhead blind,

Poor mimic of that Truth of old,
The Patriarchs' hope—a Faith revealed—
Compressed its God in mortal mould,
The prisoner of Creation's field.

Nature and Nature's Lord were one!
Then countless gods from cloud and stream
Glanced forth; from sea, and moon, and sun:
So ran the pantheistic dream.

And thus the All-Holy, thus the All-True,
The One Supreme, the Good, the Just,
Like mist was scattered, lost like dew,
And vanished in the wayside dust.

Mary! through thee the idols fell:
When He the Nations longed for* came—
True God yet Man—with man to dwell,
The phantoms hid their heads for shame.

His place or thine removed, ere long
The Bards would push the Sects aside;
And lifted by the might of song
Olympus stand re-edified.

* "The Desire of the Nations."

Tota Pulchra.

XIII.

A BROKEN gleam on wave and flower—
A music that in utterance dies—
A redd'ning leaf—a falling shower—
Behold that Beauty which we prize!

And ah! how oft Corruption works
Through that brief Beauty's force or wile!
How oft a gloom eternal lurks
Beneath an evanescent smile!

But thou, serene and smiling light
Of every grace to man benign,
In thee all harmonies unite;—
The minstrelsies of Truth are thine!

Of old whate'er to mind or heart
Was dear "had leave" with thee to rest:
The "little birds" of every Art
Hung on thy Fane their procreant nest:

Cold marbles preached, 'mid change and strife,
The eternal Peace, the unchangeful Love,
And o'er the weeping vale of life
Her heavenly rainbow painting wove.

Those pictures, fair as moon or star,
The ages dear to Faith brought forth,
Formed but the illumined calendar
Of her, that Church which knows thy worth.

Not less doth Nature teach through thee
That mystery hid in hues and lines:
Who loves thee not hath lost the key
To all her sanctuaries and shrines.

The Flesh and the Spirit.

XIV.

MAN'S soul a palace is: therein
A kingly senate sits in state:
But under-winding caves of Sin
A pestilence all round create.

Man's head uptowers in arctic air:
O'er temperate zones his heart hath sway:
But tropic sands there are; and there
The lions of our nature prey.

Dread Maker of our twofold being
In night and day alternate robed,
Shine on us, that the monsters, fleeing,
May leave thine Image throned and globed!

Shine on us;—and thou shin'st! sun-bright
Flash back the ransomed fields and meads,
Trod by that Form, compact of light,
That only on the lilies feeds.

O earth, partaker of the curse,
Thy glory fled when Adam fell:
Yet—not her mother, but her nurse—
Of Mary earth was capable!

The beginning of miracles.

XV.

THE water changed to wine she saw:
She saw nought else of shapes around:
With such a trance of loving awe
That first of signs her spirit bound.

She saw in perspective benign
Whate'er that first of signs rehearsed,
That later chalice, and the wine
More changed, that slaked a holier thirst.

She saw calm homes of love and rest,
The earthly life to heaven allied,
The deaths sabbatical and blest
Of Saints that died as Joseph died.

She saw a world serene, august,
A world new-made, whose every part
Was fashioned, not of sinful dust,
But in, and from the Saviour's Heart.

She saw the stream of human kind,
So long defiled with weeds and mud,
In fontal pureness onward wind
To meet the eternal ocean flood

Within whose breast a love-star shook
More fair than he that from the skies,
As home their silent way they took,
With glory lit her tearful eyes.

"Jesus and His Mother were there."

XVI.

Love, youthful love, that mean'st so well,
And spread'st thy wings to soar so high,
Yet, backward blown by gusts from hell,
On desert sands so oft dost die!

For thee what help? From pride? from scorn?
Ah! love alone is love's defence—
True love, of love celestial born,
And nursed in caves of Reverence.

Childhood thrice-blest! thine every thought
Reveres superior mind or power,
That, sown in darkness, may be wrought
From Reverence love's consummate flower!

A sinless man, a sinless mate
Walked, linked in God, o'er Eden's sward:
But He Who links holds separate:—
Between them paced Whom both adored!

O Face so like thy Son's, look forth
  Through clouds that blot this mortal scene,
And, teaching woman's spiritual worth,
  The heart of man with fire make clean:

That so once more with spotless feet,
  Upon a world-wide Eden's sod,
Humanity may stand complete,
  One image, dual-cast from God;

And, dual-crowned, (like that fair hill
  Parnassian, which from summits twain
Flashed back the morning bright and still,
  Echoing the Muses' vestal strain)

May sing the Heavenly Lover's praise,
  With voices twain, yet lost in one,
And learn that only when we raise
  Our hearts, they beat in unison.

Lumen Nuptiarum.

XVII.

Say, who is she that walks on air,
Nor stains her foot with sinful earth?
The all-tender Vestal, chaste and fair,
In death more blameless than at birth.

Say, who is she, serenely blest,
That walks the dustier ways of life
With foot immaculate as her breast?
That Woman-maid, the Christian Wife!

Her love, a full-blown rose, each hour
Its snowy bud regerminates;
The star of Eden lights her bower;
The angel, Reverence, guards its gates.

Yet half she is, that wife—still bride—
Owes to that vestal never wed,
As homes through Him are sanctified
Who had not where to lay His head.

Both Mysteries sleep in one, secure:—
Like twins in one white cradle laid,
The life detached and marriage pure
One mother boast—the Mother-maid.

Gratiæ Plena.

XVIII.

If he of Angels, first and best,
Chief Ardour of the Seraph fires,
More graces clasps than all the rest—
Perhaps than all their ninefold choirs,

(That so proportioned worth and place
May wed, nor even war with odd,)
What plenitude of conquering grace
Must fill the Mother of her God!

Their greatness stands in limits curbed
Of sequent rank and grade; but she
Is one and whole, a world full-orbed,
An Order sole, and hierarchy:

Of fashioned things both last and first—
Added, that so from Adam's crime
Her Son might save the race accursed—
Decreed before the birth of time.

Hail, Full of Grace! To eyes of men
Light shews not mid excess of light:—
Thy glory mocks the angelic ken—
The peerless whiteness of thy white!

And yet 'twixt her and us but small
The distance:—finite it must be:
'Twixt her and God the interval
Is evermore infinity.

Vas Insigne Devotionis.

XIX.

O STRONG in prayer! our spirits bind
To God: our bodies keep from sin:
Live in our hearts that Christ may find
An incorrupt abode therein:

That He, the Eternal Spirit, He
Who overshadowed with His Grace
The depths of thy Humility,
In us may have a resting-place.

Who love thee prosper! As a breeze
Thou waft'st them o'er the ways divine:
Strange heights they reach with magic ease
Through music-moulded discipline.

"If I but touch His vesture's hem
I shall be healed, and strong, and free"—
Thou wert His Vesture, Mary!—them
His virtue heals that rèach to thee.

The Rainbow.

XX.

ALL-GLORIOUS shape that fleet'st wind-swept
Athwart the empurpled pine-girt steep,
That, sinless, from thy birth hast wept,
All-gladdening, till thy death must weep;

That in eterne ablution still
Thine innocence in shame dost shroud,
And, washed where stain was none, dost fill
With light thy penitential cloud;

Illume with peace our glooming glen,
O'er-arch with hope yon distant sea,
To angels whispering and to men,
Of her whose lowlier sanctity

In God's all-cleansing freshness shrined
Renounced all pureness of her own,
And aye her lucent brow inclined,
God's handmaid meek, before His throne.

The Second Dolour.

(Cum Filio Profuga.)

XXI.

THE fruitful River slides along;
The Conqueror's City glitters nigh;
The Palm-groves ring with dance and song;
Earth trembles, crimsoned from the sky.

Far down the sunset, lonely stands
Some temple of a bygone age,
Slow-settling into sea-like sands,
Long served with prayer and pilgrimage.

Here ruled the Shepherd-Kings, and they
That race from Sun and Moon which drew
The unending lines of Priestly sway:
Here Alexander's standard flew.

Here last the great Cæsarian star
Through Egypt's sunset flashed its beam,
While pealed the Roman trump afar,
And Earth's first Empire like a dream

Dissolved. But who are they—the Three
That pierce, thus late, yon desert wide?
The Babe is on His Mother's knee;
Low-bent an old Man walks beside.

What say'st thou Egypt? "Let them come!
Of such as little note I keep
As of the least of flies that hum
Above my deserts, or my deep!"

The Letter and the Spirit.

XXII.

How oft that Sadducean fool
That imped with feathers from the jay
As hard a heart a brain as dull
As e'er were bubble-blown from clay,

How oft his half-shut eye had roved
From sacred page to page, and read
Those words that unaffirming proved
The Resurrection from the Dead!*

Texts plainer were there: "I shall go
To him; he cannot come to me"—
"Though worms consume this Body, lo!
I in my flesh my God shall see."

Such texts the Saviour challenged not:
He willed to prove that at the core
Of well-known words to reverent Thought
There lurked a mine of unknown lore.

"What texts avouch her greatness?" Two,
For those the Letter's rind who pierce;
The Ancient Record and the New:
In Christ they meet; and Christ is hers.

* "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

The Veil.

XXIII.

For thirty years with her He lurked,
As secret as the unrisen sun:
In three short years His Work He worked:
That work we know. The victory won,

Once more the veil descends, and shrouds
That trance of Love, the Forty Days:
Like mountains lost in luminous clouds
Their marvels cheat our yearning gaze.

The Saints who rose when Jesus died,
Lazarus, twice cast from nature's womb,
Hidden their after days abide
As Enoch's life or Moses' tomb.

The Work, the Work—no more—is told:
The lore man needs not shuns his sight:
Thy Work was this, to clothe in mould
Of Adam's race the Infinite.

Thy Motherhood thine endless Act,
In this all lesser praise is drowned:
To this to add were to detract:
Sole-throned it bideth, and self-crowned,

Stella Matutina.

XXIV.

SHINE out, O Star, and sing the praise
Of that unrisen Sun whose glow
Thus feeds thee with thine earlier rays—
The secret of thy song we know.

Thou sing'st that Sun of Righteousness,
Sole light of this benighted globe,
Whose beams, from Him reflected, dress
His Mother in her shining robe.

Pale Lily, pearled around with dew,
Lift high that heaven-illumined vase,
And sing the glories ever new
Of her, God's chalice, "full of grace."

Cerulean Ocean, fringed with white,
That wear'st her colours evermore,
In all thy pureness, all thy might,
Resound her name from shore to shore—

Her name, and His, that, like thy rim
Of light the dusky lands around,
Still girds Creation's shadow dim
With Incarnation's shining bound.

Transfigured Earth, disguised too long!
It falls—that Pagan mask of Sense!
Burst forth, dumb worlds, at last in song
Of spiritual Intelligence!

XXV.

THE night through yonder cloudy cleft,
With many a lingering last regard,
Withdraws—but slowly—and hath left
Her mantle on the dewy sward.

The lawns with silver dews are strewn;
The winds lie hushed in cave and tree;
Nor stirs a flower, save one alone
That bends beneath the earliest bee.

Peace over all the garden broods;
Pathetic sweets the thickets throng;
Like breath the vapour o'er the woods
Ascends—dim woods without a song:

Or hangs, a shining, fleece-like mass
O'er half yon lake that winds afar
Among the forests, still as glass,
The mirror of that Morning Star

Which, halfway wandering from the sky,
Amid the crimson dawn delays,
And (large and less alternately)
Bends down a lustrous, tearful gaze.

Mother and home of spirits blest!
Bright gate of Heaven and golden bower!
Thy best of blessings, love and rest,
Depart not till on earth thou shower!

XXVI.

If sense of Man's unworthiness
With Nature's blameless looks at strife,
Should wake with wakening May, and press
New-born contentment out of life:

If thoughts of sable breed and blind
Should stamp upon the springing flower,
Or blacker memories haunt the mind
As ravens haunt the ruined tower:—

O then how sweet in heart to breathe
Those pure Judean gales once more;
From Bethlehem's crib to Nazareth
In heart to tread that Syrian shore!

To watch that star-like Infant bring
To one of soul as clear and white
May-lilies, fresh from Siloa's spring,
Or Passion-flower with May-dews bright!

To follow, earlier yet, the feet
Of her the "hilly land" who trod
With true love's haste, intent to greet
That aged saint beloved of God.

Before her, like a stream let loose,
The long vale's flowerage, winding, ran:
Nature resumed her Eden use;
And Earth was reconciled with Man.

Causa Nostræ Lætitiæ.

XXVII.

Whate'er is floral on the earth
To thee, O Flower, of right belongs;
Whate'er is musical in mirth,
Whate'er is jubilant in songs.

Childhood and springtide never cease
For him thy freshness keeps from stain:
Dew-drenched for him, like Gideon's fleece,
The dusty paths of life remain.

Spirit of Brightness and of Bliss!
Thy smile gives help! A sinless lure,
Thy fragrance and thy gladsomeness
Draw on to Christ; to Christ secure.

Hope, Hope is Strength! That Joy of thine
To us is Glory's earliest ray!
Through Faith's dim air, O star benign,
Look down, and light our onward way!

Stella Maris.

XXVIII.

I LEFT at morn that blissful shore
O'er which the fruit-bloom fluttered free;
And sailed the wildering waters o'er,
Till sunset streaked with blood the sea.

My sleep the hoarse sea-thunders broke—
Death-visaged cliffs, with feet foam-hid,
Leaned forth their brows through vapour-smoke,
Like tower, and tomb, and pyramid.

In death-black shadow, ghostly white
The breaker raced o'er foaming shoals:
From caverns cold of endless night
Came wailings, as of suffering Souls.

Sudden, through clearing mist, the star
Of ocean o'er the billow rose:
Down dropped the elemental war;
Tormented chaos found repose.

Star of the ocean! dear art thou,
Ah! not to earth and heaven alone:
The Suffering Church, when shines thy brow
Upon her penance, stays her moan.

To meet that glittering orb on rolls
In one slow-mounting tidal wave
The inly-working sea of Souls:—
His light it wears Who died to save!

The Holy Souls draw in their breath:
The ebon wave falls back in peace:
And, from beyond the gates of death,
Up swell the anthems of release.

Aaronis Virga.

XXIX.

Blossom for ever, blossoming Rod!
Thou didst not blossom once to die:
That Life which, issuing forth from God,
Thy life enkindled, runs not dry.

Without a root in sin-stained earth,
'Twas thine to bud Salvation's flower:
No single soul the Church brings forth
But blooms from thee and is thy dower.

Rejoice, O Eve! thy promise waned;
Transgression nipt thy flower with frost:
But, lo! a Mother man hath gained
Holier than she in Eden lost.

The Third Dolour.

(Filium quærens.)

XXX.

THREE days she seeks her Child in vain:
He Who vouchsafed that holy woe
And makes the gates of glory pain,
He, He alone its depth can know.

She wears the garment He must wear,
She tastes His chalice! From a Cross
Unseen she cries, "Where art Thou, where?
Why hast Thou me forsaken thus?"

With feebler hand she touches first
That sharpest thorn in all His Crown,
Worse than the Nails, the Reed, the Thirst,
Seeming Desertion's icy frown!

O Saviour! we, the weak, the blind,
We lose Thee, snared in Pleasure's bound:
Teach us once more Thy Face to find
Where only Thou art truly found,

In Thy true Church, its Faith, its Love,
Its anthemed Rites or Penance mute,
And that Interior Life whereof
Eternal Life is flower and fruit.

Unica.

XXXI.

While all the breathless woods aloof
Lie hush'd in noontide's deep repose,
That dove, sun-warmed on yonder roof,
With what a grave content she coos!

One note for her! Deep streams run smooth:
The ecstatic song of transience tells:
O what a depth of loving truth
In thy divine contentment dwells!

All day, with down-dropt lids, I sat,
In trance; the present scene forgone:
When Hesper rose, on Ararat,
Methought, not English hills, he shone.

Back to the ark, the waters o'er,
The primal dove pursued her flight:
A branch of that blest tree she bore
Which feeds the Church with holy light.

I heard her rustling through the air
With sliding plume—no sound beside,
Save the sea-sobbings everywhere,
And sighs of that subsiding tide.

Regina Prophetarum.

XXXII.

She took the timbrel, as the tide
Rushed, refluent, up the Red Sea shore:
"The Lord hath triumphed," she cried:
Her song rang out above the roar

Of lustral waves that, wall to wall,
Fell back upon that host abhorred:
Above the gloomy watery pall,
As eagles soar, her anthem soared.

Miriam, rejoice! a mightier far
Than thou, one day shall sing with thee!
Who rises, brightening like a star
Above yon bright baptismal sea?

That harp which David touched who rears
Heaven-high above those waters wide?
The Prophet-Queen! Throughout all years
She sings the Triumph of the Bride!

Mystica.

XXXIII.

As pebbles flung for sport, that leap
  Along the superficial tide,
But enter not those chambers deep
  Wherein the beds of pearl abide;

Such those light minds that, grazing, spurn
  The surface text of Sacred Lore,
Yet ne'er its deeper sense discern,
  Its halls of mystery ne'er explore.

Ah! not for such the unvalued gems;
  The priceless pearls of Truth they miss:
Not theirs the starry diadems
  That light God's temple in the abyss!

Ah! not for such to gaze on her
  That moves through all that empire pale;
At every shrine doth minister,
  Yet never lifts her vestal veil.

"The letter kills." Make pure thy Will;
  So shalt thou pierce the Text's disguise:
Till then, revere the veil that still
  Hides truth from truth-affronting eyes.

Expectatio.

XXXIV.

A SWEET exhaustion seems to hold
In spells of calm the shrouded eve:
The gorse itself a beamless gold
Puts forth:—yet nothing seems to grieve.

The dewy chaplets hang on air;
The willowy fields are silver-grey;
Sad odours wander here and there;—
And yet we feel that it is May.

Relaxed, and with a broken flow,
From dripping bowers low carols swell
In mellower, glassier tones, as though
They mounted through a bubbling well.

The crimson orchis scarce sustains
Upon its drenched and drooping spire
The burden of the warm soft rains;
The purple hills grow nigh and nigher.

Nature, suspending lovely toils,
On expectations lovelier broods,
Listening, with lifted hand, while coils
The flooded rivulet through the woods.

She sees, drawn out in vision clear,
A world with summer radiance drest,
And all the glories of that year
Which sleeps within her virgin breast.

XXXV.

Still on the gracious work proceeds;—
The good, great tidings preached anew
Yearly to green enfranchised meads,
And fire-topped woodlands flushed with dew.

Yon cavern's mouth we scarce can see;
Yon rock in gathering bloom lies meshed;
And all the wood-anatomy
In thickening leaves is over-fleshed.

That hermit oak which frowned so long
Upon the spring with barren spleen,
Yields to the holy Siren's song,
And bends above her goblet green.

Young maples, late with gold embossed,—
Lucidities of sun-pierced limes,
No more surprise us—merged and lost
Like prelude notes in deepening chimes.

Disordered beauties and detached
Demand no more a separate place:
The abrupt, the startling, the unmatched,
Submit to graduated grace;

While upward from the ocean's marge
The year ascends with statelier tread
To where the sun his golden targe
Finds, setting, on yon mountain's head.

The Fourth Dolour.

(The meeting on Calvary.)

XXXVI.

SHE stands before Him on the Road:
He bears the Cross, and climbs the Steep:
Three times He sinks beneath His load:
To earth He sinks: she does not weep.

She may not touch that Cross whose weight
Against His will a stranger bears:
In heart to bear it, and to wait
His upward footsteps, this is her's.

She may not prop that thorn-crowned Head:
The waves of men between them break:
Another's hand the veil must spread
Against that forehead and that cheek.

Her eyes on His are fastened. Lo!
There stand they, met on Calvary's height,
Twin mirrors of a single woe
Made by reflection infinite.

The sons of Sion round them rave:
The Roman trumpet storms the wind:
They goad Him on with spear and stave:
He passes by: she drops behind.

Turris Eburnea.

XXXVII.

This scheme of worlds, which vast we call,
Is only vast compared with man:
Compared with God, the One yet All,
Its greatness dwindles to a span.

A Lily with its isles of buds
Asleep on some unmeasured sea:—
O God, the starry multitudes,
What are they more than this to Thee?

Yet, girt by Nature's petty pale,
Each tenant holds the place assigned
To each in Being's awful scale:—
The last of creatures leaves behind

The abyss of Nothingness: the first
Into the abyss of Godhead peers,
Waiting that Vision which shall burst
In glory on the eternal years.

Tower of our Hope! through thee we climb
Finite creation's topmost stair;
Through thee from Sion's height sublime
Towards God we gaze through purer air.

Infinite distance still divides
Created from Creative Power;
But all which intercepts and hides
Lies dwarfed by that surpassing Tower!

Jesum Ostende.

XXXVIII.

Who doubts that thou art finite? Who
  Is ignorant that from Godhead's height
To what is loftiest here below
  The interval is infinite?

O Mary! with that smile thrice-blest
  Upon their petulance look down;—
Their dull negation, cold protest—
  Thy smile will melt away their frown!

Show them thy Son! That hour their heart
  Will beat and burn with love like thine;
Grow large; and learn from thee that art
  Which communes best with things divine.

The man who grasps not what is best
  In *creaturely* existence, he
Is narrowest in the brain; and least
  Can grasp the thought of Deity.

Janua Cœli.

XXXIX.

They seek not; or amiss they seek;—
The hard, dry soul—the captious brain:—
To Love alone those instincts speak
Whose challenge never yet was vain.

True Gate of Heaven! As light through glass,
So He who never left the sky
To this low earth was pleased to pass
Through thine unstained Virginity:

And, thus, aright to know thy Son
Through knowledge comes of thee in part,
Interior Spirit-Vision won
Through open tent-doors of the heart.

Summed up in thee our hearts behold
The glory of *created* things:—
From His, thy Son's, corporeal mould
Looks forth the eternal King of Kings!

The Fifth Dolour.

(Beside the Cross.)

XL.

She stood in silence. Slowly passed
The hours whose moments dropped in blood:
Its frown the Darkness further cast:
She moved not: silently she stood.

No human sympathy she sought:
Her help was God, and God alone;
Not even the instinctive respite caught
From passionate gesture, sigh or moan.

Her silence listened. On the air
Like death-bells tolled that prime Decree
Which bade the Eternal Victim bear
Mankind's transgression. Let it be!

The Women round her heard all day
The clash of arms, the scoffing tongue:
She heard the breaking of that spray
From which the fruit of Knowledge hung.

Behold the Babe of Bethlehem! Aye!
The Infant slumbered on thy breast;
And thou that heard'st His earliest cry
Must hear His "Consummatum est."

XLI.

A SUDDEN sun-burst in the woods,
But late sad Winter's palace dim!
O'er quickening boughs and bursting buds
Pacific glories shoot and swim.

As when some heart, grief-darkened long,
Conclusive joy by force invades—
So swift the new-born splendours throng;
Such lustre swallows up the shades.

The sun we see not; but his fires
From stem to stem obliquely smite,
Till all the forest aisle respires
The golden-tongued and myriad light.

The caverns blacken as their brows
With floral fire are fringed; but all
Yon sombre vault of meeting boughs
Turns to a golden fleece its pall,

As o'er it breeze-like music rolls—
O Spring, thy limit-line is crossed!
O Earth, some orb of singing Souls
Brings down to thee *thy* Pentecost!

Dominica Pentecostes.

XLII.

CLEAR as those silver trumps of old
That woke Judea's jubilee;
Strong as the breeze of morning, rolled
O'er answering woodlands from the sea,

That matutinal anthem vast
Which winds, like sunrise, round the globe,
Following the sunrise, far and fast,
And trampling on his fiery robe.

Once more the Pentecostal torch
Lights on the courses of the year:
The "upper chamber" of the Church
Is thrilled once more with joy and fear.

Who lifts her brow from out the dust?
Who fixes on a world restored
A gaze like Eve's, but more august?
Who bends it heaven-ward on her Lord?

It is the Birthday of the Bride:
The new begins; the ancient ends:
From all the gates of Heaven flung wide
The promised Paraclete descends.

He who o'ershadowed Mary once
O'ershades Humanity to-day;
And bids her fruitful prove in sons
Co-heritors with Christ for aye.

Dominica Pentecostes.

XLIII.

THE Form decreed of tree and flower,
The Shape susceptible of life,
Without the infused vivific Power,
Were but a slumber or a strife.

He whom the plastic hand of God
Himself created out of earth
Remained a statue and a clod
Till spirit infused to life gave birth.

So, till that hour, the Church. In Christ
Her awful structure, nerve and bone,
Though founded, shaped, and organised,
Existed but in skeleton,

Till down on that predestined frame,
Complete through all its sacred mould,
The Pentecostal Spirit came,—
The self-same Spirit who of old

Creative o'er the waters moved.
Thenceforth the Church, made One and Whole,
Arose in Him, and lived, and loved—
His Temple she; and He her Soul.

The Sixth Dolour.

(Taken down from the Cross.)

XLIV.

THE Saviour from the Cross they took:
  Across His Mother's knee He lies:
She wept not, but a little shook
  As with dead hand she closed dead eyes.

The surface wave of Grief we know:
  By us its depths are unexplored:
She treads the still abyss below,
  Following the footsteps of her Lord.

Above her head the great floods roll:
  That Lord, that Son remains her Hope:
And calm, within the storms, her Soul,
  Calm as the whirlpool's central drop.

The Saviour from the Cross they took:
  Across His Mother's knee He lay:
O passers by! be still and look!
  That Twain compose one cross for aye.

Refugium Peccatorum.

XLV.

Who, who are those that beat with brands,
Like bandits, on our palace-gate?
That storm our keep like rebel-bands?
That come like judgment, or like fate?

Who, who are those that spurn by night
Our sumptuous floors with brazen shoon,
And banquet halls whose latest light
Is lightning, or a waning moon?

Who, who are those that by our bed
Like giants tower in iron mail;
That press against the prostrate head
Their foot, and wind through heaven the flail?

The Sins are these! Sin-pasturing Past!
How in thy darkness they have grown
That seemed to die! How we at last
To pigmy size have shrunk, self-known!

Help, sinless Mother! Bid Him spare!
He loves us more—that Judge benign—
Than thou. 'Tis He that wills thy prayer:
He loves: but Love alone is thine.

Turris Davidica.

XLVI.

THE towerèd City loves thee well,
Strong Tower of David's House! In thee
She hails the unvanquished citadel
That frowns o'er Error's subject sea.

With magic might that Tower repels
A host that breaks where foe is none,—
No foe but statued Saints in cells
High-ranged, and smiling in the sun.

There stands Augustin; Leo there;
And Bernard, with a maiden face
Like John's; and, strong at once and fair,
That Spirit-Pythian, Athanase.

Upon thy star-surrounded height
God's Angel keepeth watch and ward;
And sunrise flashes thence ere night
Hath left dark street and dewy sward.

"Tu sola interemisti omnes Hæreses."

XLVII.

What tenderest hand uprears on high
The standard of Incarnate God?
Successive portents that deny
Her Son, who tramples? She who trod

Long since on Satan! Who were those
That, age by age, their Lord denied?
Their seats they set with Mary's foes:—
They mocked the Mother as the Bride.

Of such was Arius; and of such
* He whom the Ephesian Sentence felled:
† Her Title triumphed. At the touch
Of Truth the insurgent rout was quelled.

Back, back the hosts of Hell were driven
As forth that sevenfold thunder rolled:—
And in the Church's mystic Heaven
There was great silence as of old.

* Nestorius. † Dei-para.

The Seventh Dolour.

(Before the Tomb.)

XLVIII.

Before the Tomb the Mother sate
  Amid the new-delved garden ground:
Her eyes upon its stony gate
  Were fixed, while darkness closed around.

A wind above the olives crept:
  It seemed the world's collected sigh:
That Mother's eyes their vigil kept:
  She felt but this; her Lord was nigh.

Behind her, leaning each on each,
  The Holy Women waited near:
Nor any spake of comfort: speech
  Was slain by sorrow, and by fear.

From realm to realm of night He passed,
  That Soul which smote the dark to day:
That Mother's eyes were settled fast
  Upon the Tomb where Jesus lay.

Ut Acies Ordinata.

XLIX.

THE watchman watched along the walls:
And lo! an hour or more ere light
Loud rang his trumpet. From their halls
The revellers rushed into the night.

There hung a terror on the air;
There moved a terror under ground;—
The hostile hosts, heard everywhere,
Within, without—were nowhere found.

"The Christians to the lions! Ho!"—
Alas! self-tortured crowds, let be!
Let go your wrath; your fears let go:
Ye gnaw the net, but cannot flee.

Ye drank from out Orestes' cup;
Orestes' Furies drave ye wild.
Who conquers from on high? Look up!
A Woman, holding forth a Child!

Sedes Sapientiæ.

L.

O THAT the wordy war might cease!
Self-sentenced Babel's strife of tongues!
Loud rings the arena. Athletes, peace!
Nor drown the wild-dove's Song of Songs.

Alas, the wanderers feel their loss:
With tears they seek—ah, seldom found—
That peace whose volume is the Cross;
That peace which leaves not holy ground.

Mary, who loves true peace loves thee!
A happy child, not taught of Scribes,
He stands beside the Church's knee;
From her the lore of Christ imbibes.

Hourly he drinks it from her face:
For there his eyes, he knows not how,
The face of Him she loves can trace,
And, crowned with thorns, the sovereign brow.

"Behold! all colours blend in white!
Behold! all Truths have root in Love!"
So sings, half lost in light of light,
Her Song of Songs the mystic Dove.

Truth.

LI.

PROFANE are they, and without ruth,
Unclean, unholy, and unjust,
Who, loving knowledge, love not Truth:
Such love is intellectual lust.

He loves not Truth who over-runs
Like hunting-ground her harvest store,
The birthright trampling of his sons;
Truth's gambler, staking "all" on "more;"—

Who Truth from Error scorns to sift;
Contemns that Truth enthroned in state,
God's Vestal keeping her sweet gift
In fruitfulness inviolate.

Who thirsts for truths of lesser place,
Discovered Fact, or Natural Law,
But spurns the supernatural base
Of Truth's whole kingdom without flaw.

For on the adamantine Rock
Of Truth, Revealed, and Spirit-proved,
Stands Faith, and meets the warring shock
Of world on world with face unmoved,

Thrice blest because not "Flesh and Blood"
That knowledge certain, and serene
To Peter taught of old, but God,
Sole Teacher of the things unseen.

Domus Aurea.

LII.

"Wisdom hath built herself a House,
And hewn her out her pillars seven." *
Her wine is mixed. Her guests are those
Who share the harvest-home of heaven.

Who guards the gates? The flaming sword
Of Penance. Every way it turns:
But healing from on high is poured
On each that fire seraphic burns.

The fruits upon her table piled
Are gathered from the Tree of Life.
Around are ranged the undefiled,
And those that conquered in the strife.

Who tends the guests? Who smiles away
Sad memories? bids misgiving cease?
A crowned one countenanced like the day—
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.

"They have no wine:"—at Heaven's high Feast
That soft Petition still has place,
And bathes—so wills the Kingly Priest,
Whose "Hour is come"—the worlds with Grace.

* Proverbs ix. 1.

MAY CAROLS.

PART III.

PART III.

Implicit Faith,

OR "MULTUM NON MULTA."

I.

Of all great Nature's tones that sweep
  Earth's resonant bosom, far or near,
Low-breathed or loudest, shrill or deep,
  Few, few are grasp'd by mortal ear.

Ten octaves close our scale of sound:
  Its myriad grades, distinct or twin'd,
Transcend our hearing's petty bound,
  To us as colours to the blind.

In sound's unmeasured empire thus
  The heights, the depths alike we miss:—
Ah, but in *measured* sound to us
  A compensating spell there is!

In holy music's golden speech
  Remotest notes to notes respond:
Each octave is a world; yet each
  Vibrates to worlds its own beyond.

Our narrow pale the vast resumes;
Our sea-shell whispers of the sea:
Echoes are ours of angel plumes
That winnow far infinity!

—Clasp thou of Truth the central core!
Hold fast that centre's central sense!
An atom there shall fill thee more
Than realms on Truth's circumference.

That cradled Saviour, mute and small,
Was God—is God while worlds endure!
Who holds Truth truly holds it all
In essence, or in miniature.

Know that thou know'st! He knoweth much
Who knows not many things: and he
Knows most whose knowledge hath a touch
Of God's divine simplicity.

Mater Viventium.

II.

In vain thine altars do they heap
With blooms of violated May
Who fail the words of Christ to keep;
Thy Son who love not, nor obey.

Their songs are as a serpent's hiss;
Their praise a poniard's poisoned edge;
Their offering taints, like Judas' kiss,
Thy shrine; their vows are sacrilege.

Sadly from such thy countenance turns:
Thou canst not stretch thy Babe to such
(Albeit for all thy pity yearns)
As greet Him with a leper's touch.

Who loveth thee must love thy Son:
Weak Love grows strong thy smile beneath;
But nothing comes from nothing; none
Can reap Love's harvest out of Death.

III.

THE golden rains are dashed against
Those verdant walls of lime and beech
With which our happy vale is fenced
Against the north; yet cannot reach

The stems that lift yon leafy crest
High up above their dripping screen:
The chestnut fans are downward pressed
On banks of bluebell hid in green.

White vapours float along the glen,
Or rise from every sunny brake;—
A pause amid the gusts—again
The warm shower sings across the lake.

Sing on, all-cordial showers, and bathe
The deepest root of loftiest pine!
The cowslip dimmed, the "primrose rathe",
Refresh; and drench in nectarous wine

Yon fruit-tree copse, all blossomed o'er
With forest-foam and crimson snow—
Behold! above it bursts once more
The world-embracing, heavenly bow!

IV.

Here, in this paradise of light,
  Superfluous were both tree and grass:
Enough to watch the sunbeams smite
  Yon white flower sole in the morass.

From his cold nest the skylark springs;
  Sings, pauses, sings; shoots up anew;
Attains his topmost height, and sings
  Quiescent in his vault of blue.

With eyes half-closed I watch that lake
  Flashed from whose plane the sun-sparks fly,
Like souls new-born that shoot and break
  From thy deep sea, Eternity!

Ripplings of sunlight from the wave
  Ascend the white rock, high and higher;
Soft gurglings fill the satiate cave;
  Soft airs amid the reeds expire.

All round the lone and luminous meer
  The dark world stretches, far and free:
That skylark's song alone I hear;
  That flashing wave alone I see.

O myriad Earth! Where'er a Word
  Of thine makes way into the soul,
An echo million-fold is stirred:—
  Of thee the part is as the whole.

Regina Cœli.

V.

In some celestial realm we know
The God-man keeps His court sublime,
As Adam ruled the sphere below
In that first Eden's sinless prime.

He too, that second Adam, hears
Those rivers four engird His bound;—
Serene advance of sleepless years
With God's accomplished counsels crowned.

Around Him, close as Eden leaves,
The Souls consummate hang in trance:
Like wind, the Spirit among them weaves
Eternal song, or through the expanse

On-wafts, like snowy clouds high-piled,
Those pilgrims of God's trackless Will,
The white hosts of the Undefiled
Whom love divine alone could fill.

The lustral mist for aye ascends:
All creatures mix, secure from strife:
At last the Tree of Knowledge blends
Its branches with the Tree of Life.

An Eve partakes that Eden. She
Who decked His cradle, shares His throne:—
The solitudes of Deity,
These, these are His, and His alone.

Fest. Assumptionis.

VI.

The mother of the heavenly Child
Who made the world, and who redeemed
The maid and mother undefiled:—
She died, or else to die she seemed.

Once more above the late-entombed
They bent. What found they? Vacant space:
To heaven had Mary been assumed,
And only flowers were in the place.

O happy earth! elected sphere!
Dream blissful dreams in vale and grove!
Thou too thy Maker's voice shalt hear;
Thou too thy great Assumption prove!

The earth shall be renewed: the skies
Shall bloom with glories unrevealed:
And every spring but typifies
The wonders then to be unsealed.

Even now, behold, the year that died
Revives. The winds of south and east
Have blown upon our shores, and cried,
"Prepare, prepare the Paschal Feast."

MAY CAROLS.

PART III.

"Who from the Desert upward moves
Like cloud of incense onward borne?
Who, moving, rests on Him she loves?
Who mounts from regions of the Morn?

"Behold! The apple-tree beneath—
There where of old thy Mother fell—
I raised thee up. More strong than Death
Is Love;—more strong than Death or Hell."*

* Cant. viii. 5.

Mater Venerabilis.

IX.

Come from the midnight mountain tops,
  The mountains where the panthers play:
The vestal cowl of darkness drops;
  Come fair and fairer than the day!

Our hearts are wounded with thine eyes:
  They stamp thereon in words of light
The mystery of the starry skies;
  The "Name o'er every name" they write.

Come from thy Lebanonian peaks
  Whose sacerdotal cedars nod
Above the world, when morning breaks—
  The Mountain of the House of God.

Weakness and Dream have passed like night;
  Religion claims her ancient bound,
On-borne in venerable might,
  By lions haled, and turret-crowned.

Advocata.

X.

I saw, in visions of the night,
Creation like a sea outspread,
With surf of stars and storm of light
And movements manifold and dread.

Then lo, within a Human Hand
A Sceptre moved that storm above:
Thereon, as on the golden wand
Of kings new-crowned, there sat a Dove.

Beneath her gracious weight inclined
That Sceptre drooped. The waves had rest:
And Sceptre, Hand, and Dove were shrined
Within a glassy ocean's breast.

His Will it was that placed her there!
He at whose word the tempests cease
Upon that Sceptre planted fair
That peace-bestowing type of Peace!

Festum SS. Trinitatis.

XI.

Like some broad flood whose conquering course
  Shakes the dim forests night and day,
On sweeps the prime creative Force,
  And re-creates the worlds alway.

The eternal Mind, the sole-born Thought,
  Shape-entering matter's stamp and mould,
Through all the spaces wonder-fraught,
  Speaks law and order as of old.

That Love which, ere it overflowed,
  And beat on lone Creation's shore,
Issuing from Both with Both abode,
  Proceeds, abides, for evermore.

Yet man who—not in brow or breast,
  But heart, and reason, and free-will—
Imaged his Maker, and express'd,
  Ignored that Triune Mystery still!

Here failed his science—failed as sight
  Earth's motion fails to mark! Ah me!
Our eye pursues the swallow's flight;
  The circling sphere it cannot see!

And yet as sense, abashed, down kneels,
  And wins from science lore sublime,
To kneeling science Faith reveals
  Mysteries transcending space and time.

The Infinite remains unknown,
  Too vast for man to *understand:*
In Him, the "Woman's Seed," alone
  We trace God's footprint in the sand.

Thronus Trinitatis.

XII.

Each several Saint the Church reveres,
What is he but an altar whence
Some separate Virtue ministers
To God a separate frankincense?

Each beyond each, not made of hands,
They rise, a ladder angel-trod:
Star-bright the last and loftiest stands—
That altar is the Throne of God.

Lost in the uncreated light
A Form all Human rests thereon:
His shade from that surpassing height
Beyond Creation's verge is thrown.

Him "Lord of lords, and King of kings,"
The chorus of all worlds proclaim:—
"He took from her," one angel sings
At intervals, "His Human frame."

Regina Sanctorum Omnium.

XIII.

He seemed to linger with them yet:
  But late ascended to the skies,
They saw—ah, how could they forget?—
  The form they loved, the hands, the eyes.

From anchored boat—in lane or field—
  He taught; He blessed, and brake the bread;
The hungry filled; the afflicted healed;
  And wept, ere yet he raised, the dead.

But when, like some supreme of hills,
  Whose feet shut out its summit's snow,
That, hid no longer, heavenward swells
  As further from its base we go,

Abroad His perfect Godhead shone,
  Each hour more plainly kenned on high,
And clothed His Manhood with the sun,
  And, cleansing, hurt the adoring eye;

Then fixed His Church a deepening gaze
  Upon His Saints. With Him they sate,
And, burning in that Godhead's blaze,
  They seemed that Manhood to dilate.

His were they: of His likeness each
  Had grace some fragment to present,
And nearer brought to mortal reach
  Some imitable lineament.

Fest. SS. Trinitatis.

XIV.

Fall back, all worlds, into the abyss,
That man may contemplate once more
That which He ever was Who is:—
The Eternal Essence we adore.

Angelic hierarchies! recede
Beyond extinct Creation's shade!
What were ye at the first? Decreed:—
Decreed, not fashioned; thought, not made!

Like wind the untold Millenniums passed.
Sole-throned He sat; yet not alone:
Godhead in Godhead still was glassed;—
The Spirit was breathed from Sire and Son.

Prime Virgin, separate and sealed;
Nor less of social Love the root;
Dimly in lowliest shapes revealed;
Entire in every Attribute;—

Thou liv'st in all things, and around;
To Thee external is there nought;
Thou of the boundless art the bound;
And still Creation is Thy Thought.

In vain, O God, our wings we spread;
So distant art Thou—yet so nigh.
Remains but this, when all is said,
For Thee to live; in Thee to die.

XV.

WHERE is the crocus now, that first,
When earth was dark and heaven was grey,
A prothalamion flash, up-burst?
Ah, then we deemed not of the May!

The clear stream stagnates in its course;
Narcissus droops in pallid gloom;
Far off the hills of golden gorse
A dusk Saturnian face assume.

The seeded dandelion dim
Casts loose its air-globe on the breeze;
Along the grass the swallows skim;
The cattle couch among the trees.

Yet ever lordlier loveliness
Succeeds to that which slips our hold:
The thorn assumes her snowy dress;
Laburnum bowers their robes of gold.

Down waves successive of the year
The season slides; but sinks to rise,
With ampler view, as on we steer,
Of lovelier lights and loftier skies.

"Ad Nives."

XVI.

BEFORE the morn began to break
The bright One bent above that pair
Whose childless vows aspired to take
The Mother of their Lord for heir.

'Twas August: even in midnight shade
The roofs were hot, and hot the street:—
"Build me a fane," the vision said,
"Where first your eyes the snow shall meet."*

With snow the Esquiline was strewn
At morn!—Fair Legend! who but thinks
Of thee, when first the breezes blown
From summer Alp to Alp he drinks?

He stands: he hears the torrents dash:
Slowly the vapours break; and lo!
Through chasms of endless azure flash
The peaks of everlasting snow.

* Santa Maria Maggiore, on the Esquiline, at Rome.

He stands; he listens; on his ear
Swells softly forth some virgin hymn,
The white procession winding near,
With glimmering lights in sunshine dim.

Mother of Purity and Peace!
They sing the Saviour's name and thine:—
Clothe them for ever with the fleece
Unspotted of thy Lamb Divine!

XVII.

A low ground-mist, the hills between,
Measuring their intervals, distends,
Ridge beyond ridge, the sylvan scene;
Far off the reddening river bends

From bridge to town. On hueless air
The moon suspends her pearly shell
Above the eastern ledges bare;
But sunset throngs yon western dell

That pants through amethystine mist,
And gleams as though the Sons of God
Through golden ether stooped, and kissed
Some Syrian vale the Saviour trod!

The beatific Splendours wane:—
The hills, of all that sweetness gone,
A roseate memory still retain:—
Thou compline chime, peal on, peal on!

Of Him thou sing'st whose Blood erased
Earth's ancient stain by power divine;
Of them, that second pair, who paced
That second Eden, Palestine.

Fest. Puritatis.

XVIII.

Far down the bird may sing of love;
The honey-bearing blossom blow:
But hail, ye hills that rise above
The limit of perpetual snow!

O Alpine City, with thy walls
Of rock eterne and spires of ice,
Where torrent still to torrent calls,
And precipice to precipice;—

How like that holier City thou,
The heavenly Salem's earthly porch,
Which rears among the stars her brow,
And plants firm feet on earth—the Church!

"Decaying, ne'er to be decayed,"
Her woods, like thine, renew their youth:
Her streams, in rocky arms embayed,
Are clear as virtue, strong as truth.

At times the lake may burst its dam;
  Black pine and rock the valley strew;
But o'er the ruin soon the lamb
  Its flowery pasture crops anew.

Like thee, in regions near the sky
  She piles her cloistered snows, and thence
Diffuses gales of purity
  O'er fields of consecrated sense.

On those still heights a love-light glows
  The plains from them alone receive;—
Not all the Lily! There *thy* Rose,
  O Mary, triumphs, morn and eve!

Agios Athanatos.

XIX.

Cloud-piercing Mountains! Chance and Change
More high than you their thrones advance:
Self-vanquished Nature's rockiest range
Gives way before them like the trance

Of one that wakes. From morn to eve
Through fissured clefts her mists make way;
At Night's cold touch they freeze, and cleave
Her crags; and, with a Titan's sway,

Flake off and peel the rotting rocks,
And heap the glacier tide below
With isles of sand and floating blocks,
As leaves on streams when tempests blow.

Lo, thus the great decree all-just,
O Earth, thy mountains hear; and learn
From fire and frost its import—"dust
Thou art; and shalt to dust return."

He only *is* Who ever was;
The All-measuring Mind; the Will Supreme.
Rocks, mountains, worlds, like bubbles pass:
God is; the things not God but seem.

Fœderis Arca.

XX.

From end to end, O God, Thy Will
With swift yet ordered might doth reach:
Thy purposes their scope fulfil
In sequence, resting each on each.

In Thee is nothing sudden; nought
From harmony and law that swerves:
The orbits of Thine act and thought
In soft gradation wind their curves.

O then with what a gradual care
Must thou have shaped that Ark and Shrine
Ordained the Eternal Word to bear—
That Garden of Thy mystic Vine!

How many a gift within her breast
Lay stored, for Him a couch to strew!
How many a virtue lined His nest!
How many a grace beside Him grew!

Of love on love what sweet excess!
How deep a faith! a hope how high!—
Mary! on earth of thee we guess;
But we shall see thee when we die!

Spiritus Sponsa.

XXI.

As though, fast-borne the hills along,
  At dawn some shepherd girl or boy
Should wrestle with the lark in song,
  And, shaft for shaft, retort his joy,

So walked, the hills of Truth above,
  The Bride Elect, the sinless maid;
So, challenged by the all-heavenly love,
  The all-heavenly lover's voice repaid.

From zenith heights incessant fell
  On her His grace like sunny rain:
Unvanquished and invincible
  Her heart repaid that golden grain.

Once more, in many an instant gleam,
  She caught, unscorched, and unabashed,
That vision of the Face supreme
  Which on her first-born Spirit flashed.

Diseased are we: the infectious fire
  Corrupts our life-blood from our birth:
She, she was like the unfallen Sire,
  Compacted out of virgin earth.

Earth-fires are ours: they seek the height:
  The Power that raised them drags them down:
She knew but one—a fire all light:—
  It hung above her Heart—a Crown.

In God she lived: His world she trod:
  Saw Him and His, and nought beside:—
He only *lives* who lives in God;
  That hour when Adam fell, he died.

Orante.

XXII.

She mused upon the Saints of old;—
  Rock-like, on rock she stood, foot-bare:
On Him she mused, the Child foretold;
  To Him upheld her hands in prayer—

Unwavering hands, that drew the fires
  Of grace to earth, the blind, the proud,
With secret might, like mountain spires
  That suck the lightning from the cloud.

No moment passed without its crown;
  And each new grace was used so well
It dragged some tenfold talent down,
  Some miracle on miracle.

O golden House! O boundless store
  Of wealth by heavenly commerce won!
When God Himself could give no more,
  He gave thee all; He gave His Son!

Respexit Humilitatem.

XXIII.

Not all thy purity, although
The whitest moon that ever lit
The peaks of Lebanonian snow
Shone dusk and dim compared with it;—

Not that great love of thine, whose beams
Transcended in their virtuous heat
Those suns which melt the ice-bound streams,
And make earth's pulses newly beat:—

It was not these that from the sky
Drew down to thee the Eternal Word:
He looked on thy Humility;
He knew thee, "Handmaid of thy Lord."

Let no one claim with thee a part;
Let no one, Mary, name thy name,
While, aping God, upon his heart
Pride sits, a Demon robed in flame.

Proud Vices, die! Where Sin has place
Be Sin's avenger self-disgust:
Proud Virtues, doubly die, that Grace
At last may burgeon from your dust.

Mulier Fortis.

XXIV.

SUPREME among the things create
Omnipotence revealed below,
More swift than thought, more strong than fate,
Such, such, Humility, art thou!

All strength beside is weakness. Might
Belongs to God: and they alone,
Self-emptied souls and seeming-slight,
Are filled with God and share His throne.

O Mary! strong wert thou and meek;
Thy meekness gave thee strength divine:
Thyself in nothing didst thou seek;
Therefore thy Maker made Him thine.

Through Pride our parents disobeyed;
Rebellious Sense avenged the wrong:
The Soul, the body's captive made,
No more was fruitful, or was strong.

With barrenness the earth was cursed;
Inviolate she brought forth no more
Her fruits, nor freely as at first:—
Thou cam'st, her Eden to restore!

Low breathes the wind upon the string;
The harp, responsive, sounds in turn:
Thus o'er thy *Soul* the Spirit's wing
Creative passed; and Christ was born.

In Civitate Sanctificata Requiebi.

XXV.

In silence, like a ridge of snows,
Slow reared in lands forever calm,
On Sion's brow the Temple rose;
In stillness grew, as grows the palm.

Far off, on ridges vapour-draped,
Was hewn and carved each destined stone:
Far off, the axe the cedars shaped
Upon their native Lebanon.

So rose that Temple, holier far,
The unborn Saviour's sacred shrine:
Round her there swelled no din of war:
The peace that girt her was divine.

The deep foundations of that fane
Were laid, ere lived the hills and seas,
In many a dread, unquarried vein
Of God's high Will, and fix'd Decrees.

High Queen of Peace! Her God possessed,
Her heart could feel no earthly want:
His kingdom, 'stablished in her breast,
Triumphant was, not militant:

And day by day more steadfast played
His love about its raptured thrall,
Like some eternal sunset stayed
On cliff rich-veined, or mountain wall.

"In Electis meis mitte Radices."

XXVI.

Rough is the shock of adverse seas;
  Sudden the up-bursting of a sect:
Thou, like a Vine, by soft degrees
  Didst root thyself in God's Elect.

But, like some Western hill that flings
  O'er sunset vales at last its shade,
Thy power shall wax when sensuous things
  Give place, and shapes ephemeral fade.

In the world's eve thy Star shall flash
  Through reddening skies that cease to weep,
While kings to earth their sceptres dash,
  And angel bands the harvest reap.

Beati mites.

XXVII.

Thy song is not the song of morn,
O thrush, but calmer and more strong;
While sunset woods around thee burn,
And fire-touched stems resound thy song.

O songstress of the thorn whereon
As yet the white but streaks the green,
Sing on! sing on! Thou sing'st as one
That sings of what his eyes have seen.

In thee some Seraph's rapture tells
Of joys we guess not! Heaven draws near:
I hear the immortal City's bells:
The triumph of the blest I hear.

The whole wide earth, to God heart-bare,
Basks like some happy Umbrian vale
By Francis trodden and by Clare,
When anthems sweetened every gale,

When greatness thirsted to be good,
When faith was meek and love was brave,
When hope by every cradle stood,
And rainbows spanned each new-made grave.

Sine Labe originali Concepta.

XXVIII.

Her foot is on the Lord of night:
  On Heaven, not him, are fixed her eyes:
That foot is, as a lily, light;—
  Not less that Serpent writhes and dies!

O Eve, he dies—that tempter fell!
  O Earth, that pest whose poison-spume,
Exasperate with the fires of hell,
  Thy blood envenomed, meets his doom!

But whence the conquering puissance? Lo!
  That Woman clasps the "Woman's Seed:"
That Infant quells the infernal foe:
  Messiah triumphs: His the deed!

The weight she feels not she transmits:
  The weight of worlds her arms sustain:
Who made the worlds—in heaven Who sits—
  Through her that foe hath touched and slain.

Sine Labe originali Concepta.

XXIX.

Met in a point* the circles twain
Of temporal and eternal things
Embrace, close linked. Redemption's chain
Drops thence to earth its myriad rings.

In either circle, from of old,
That point of meeting stood decreed;—
Twin mysteries cast in one deep mould,
"The Woman," and "the Woman's Seed."

Mary, long ages ere thy birth
Resplendent with Salvation's Sign,
In thee a stainless hand the earth
Put forth, to meet the Hand Divine!

The Word made Flesh! the Way! the Door!
The link that dust with Godhead blends!
Through Him the worlds their God adore:—
Through thee that God to man descends.

* The Incarnation.

Sine Labe originali Concepta.

XXX.

A SOUL-LIKE sound, subdued yet strong,
A whispered music, mystery-rife,
A sound like Eden airs among
The branches of the Tree of Life—

At first no more than this; at last
The voice of every land and clime,
It swept o'er Earth, a clarion blast:
Earth heard, and shook with joy sublime.

Mary! thy triumph was her own.
In thee she saw her prime restored:
She saw ascend a spotless Throne
For Him, her Saviour, and her Lord.

First trophy of all-conquering Grace,
First victory of that Blood all pure,
Of man's once fair, but fallen race
Thou stood'st, the monument secure.

The Church had spoken. She that dwells
Sun-clad with beatific light,
From Truth's unvanquished citadels,
From Sion's Apostolic height,

Had stretched her sceptred hands, and pressed
The seal of Faith, defined and known,
Upon that Truth till then confessed
By Love's instinctive sense alone.

Ancilla Domini.

XXXI.

THE crown of Creatures, first in place,
Was, of all creatures, creature most:
By nature nothing—all by grace;
Redemption's first, and loftiest boast.

Handmaid of God in heart and will,
Without His life she seemed a death;
A void that He alone could fill,
A word suspended on His breath.

Yet—void and nothing—she in Him
The creature's sole perfection found:—
She was the great Rock's shadow dim;
She was the silence, not the sound.

On golden airs—by Him upheld—
She knelt, a soft Subjection mute,
A hushed Dependance, tranced and spelled,
Still yearning towards the Absolute.

She was a sea-shell from the deep
Of God; her function this alone,
Of Him to whisper as in sleep,
In everlasting undertone.

This hour on Him her eyes are set!
And those who tread the earth she trod
Like her, themselves in her forget,
And her remember but in God.

XXXII.

Brow-bound with myrtle and with gold,
  Spring, sacred now from blasts and blights,
Lifts in a firm, untrembling hold
  Her chalice of fulfilled delights.

Confirmed around her queenly lip
  The smile late wavering, on she moves;
And seems through deepening tides to step
  Of steadier joys and larger loves.

The stony Ash itself relents,
  Into the blue embrace of May
Sinking, like old impenitents
  Heart-touched at last; and, far away,

The long wave yearns along the coast
  With sob suppressed, like that which thrills
(While o'er the altar mounts the Host)
  Some chapel on the Irish hills.

Corpus Christi.

XXXIII.

Rejoice, thou Church of God! be glad,
This day triumphant here below!
He cometh, in meekest emblems clad;
Himself He cometh to bestow!

That body which thou gav'st, O Earth,
He gives thee back—that Flesh, that Blood;
Born of the Altar's mystic birth;
At once thy Worship and thy Food.

He who of old on Calvary bled
On all thine altars lies to-day,
A bloodless Sacrifice, but dread;
The Lamb in heaven adored for aye.

His Godhead on the Cross He veiled;
His Manhood here He veileth too:
But Faith has eagle eyes unscaled;
And Love to Him she loves is true.

"I will not leave you orphans. Lo!
While lasts the world with you am I."
Saviour! we see Thee not; but know,
With burning hearts, that Thou art nigh!

He comes! Blue Heaven, thine incense breathe
O'er all the consecrated sod;
And thou, O Earth, with flowers enwreathe
The steps of thine advancing God!

"When Thou hast set mine heart at liberty."

XXXIV.

How narrow earthly loves—even those
  Vitiate the least with earthly stain!
What bars of Self around them close!—
  Not Death itself can burst the chain.

We love amiss; we sorrow worse,
  Wan vintage of a barren sun
Draining around an ill-waked corse
  In death-vaults of delight foregone.

O thou whose love to Him was knit
  So near thee, yet so high above,
In whom to love was to submit,
  In whom Submission meant but Love;

Whose heart great Love dilated so
  That by His Cross, a Mother twice,
All men thy sons became; whose Woe
  But crowned true Love's Self-Sacrifice;

Make thou the bosom, pure before,
  Through grief more solid-pure to grow;
The lily vase that shook of yore
  Make thou the lily filled with snow.

The thought of thee among the Blest
  A bliss snow-pure o'er earth doth breathe:
Thy rest in heaven diffuses rest
  O'er those who love and mourn beneath.

Corpus Christi.

XXXV.

WHAT music swells on every gale?
What heavenly Herald rideth past?
Vale sings to vale, "He comes; all hail!"
Sea sighs to sea, "He comes at last."

The Earth bursts forth in choral song;
Aloft her "Lauda Sion" soars;
Her myrtle boughs at once are flung
Before a thousand Minster doors.

Far on the white processions wind
Through wood and plain and street and court:
The kings and prelates pace behind
The King of kings in seemly sort.

The incense floats on Grecian air;
Old Carmel echoes back the chant;
In every breeze the torches flare
That curls the waves of the Levant.

On Ramah's plain—in Bethlehem's bound—
Is heard to-day a gladsome voice:
"Rejoice," it cries, "the lost is found!
With Mary's joy, O Earth, rejoice!"

Cor de Corde.

XXXVI.

"Behold thy Mother!" From the Cross
He gave her—not to one alone:
We are His Brethren; unto us
He gave a mother as to John.

Behold the greatest gift of Christ,
Save that wherein Himself He gives,
The wonder-working Eucharist,
Sole life of each that truly lives.

Mysterious Bread, not joined and knit
With him that eats, like mortal food,
But, fire-like, joining him with It,
And blending with the Church of God!

Mary! from thee the Saviour took
That Flesh He gives! The mercies twain,
Like streams of a divided brook,
But separate to meet again.

In morte Tutamen.

XXXVII.

It was the dread last Eucharist:
The hopes and fears of earth were gone;
The latest, lingering friend dismissed;
The bed was ashes strewed o'er stone.

It was the dear last Eucharist:
The old man lay in silent prayer:
His heart was now a Shrine, and Christ
Was with His Mother whispering there.

He heard them—heard within that veil
Voices that Angels may not hear,
Not he that said to Mary, "hail,"
Not he that watched the Sepulchre;

Voices that met with touch like light;
Murmurs that mixed, as when their breath
Two pine trees, side by side, unite:
Of Love one whispered; one of Death.

XXXVIII.

Pleasant the swarm about the bough;
The meadow-whisper round the woods;
And for their coolness pleasant now
The murmur of the falling floods.

Pleasant beneath the thorn to lie,
And let a summer fancy loose;
To hear the cuckoo's double cry;
To make the noontide sloth's excuse.

Panting, but pleased, the cattle stand
Knee-deep in water-weed and sedge,
And scarcely crop the greener band
Of osiers round the river's edge.

But hark! Far off the south wind sweeps
The golden-foliaged groves among,
Renewed or lulled, with rests and leaps—
Ah! how it makes the spirit long

To drop its earthly weight, and drift
Like yon white cloud, on pinions free,
Beyond that mountain's purple rift,
And o'er that scintillating sea!

XXXIX.

If God, for each fair action wrought
On earth, with clear, unflawed intent,
Should call an Angel out of nought
To stand its heavenly monument,

His part—when in fruition Hope
Expires, and labouring brows repose—
On those crystalline souls to drop
The crown of lily, and of rose,

How oft angelic choirs would fleet
Half way the shadowy gulf across,
Some death-delivered soul to greet,
Assoiled, ere death, from mortal dross,

Some Vestal from the cloister shade
Still pale, some village maid as pure,
That smiled to see her beauty fade,
Worked on for God in age obscure!

"Hail, Mother of our Joy!" how oft
In hearts that ne'er by earthly ties
Were blest, that Salutation soft
Would wake the beautiful surprise,

As forward, through the realms of light,
That soul, on angel-litter borne,
Made way, an eddy silver-bright
Through gold seas of the eternal morn!

XL.

Sing on, wide winds, your anthems vast!
The ear is richer than the eye:
Upon the eye no shape can cast
Such impress of Infinity.

And thou, O Man, thy wings of might
Put forth:—thou too, one day shalt soar,
And, onward borne in heavenward flight,
The starry universe explore;

Breasting that breeze which waves the bowers
Of Heaven's bright forest never mute,
Whereof this happy earth of ours
Is but the feeblest forest-fruit.

"The Spirit bloweth where He wills"—
O Effluence of that Life Divine
Which wakes the Universe, and stills,
In Thy strong refluence make us Thine!

Cæli enarrant.

XLI.

Sole Maker of the Worlds! They lay
A barren blank, a void, a nought,
Beyond the ken of solar ray
Or reach of archangelic thought.

Thou spak'st; and they were made! Forth sprang
From every region of the abyss,
Whose deeps, fire-clov'n, with anthems rang,
The spheres new-born and numberless.

Thou spak'st:—upon the winds were found
The astonished Eagles. Awed and hushed
Subsiding seas revered their bound;
And the strong forests upward rushed.

Before the Vision angels fell,
As though the Face of God they saw;
And all the panting miracle
Found rest within the arms of Law.

Perfect, O God, Thy primal plan—
That scheme frost-bound by Adam's sin:
Create, within the heart of Man,
Worlds meet for Thee; and dwell therein.

From Thy bright realm of Sense and Nature,
Which flowers enwreathe and stars begem,
Shape Thou Thy Church; the crowned Creature;
The Bride; the New Jerusalem!

The "Unknown God."

XLII.

Behind this vast and wondrous frame
Of worlds whereof we nothing know
Except their aspects, and their name,
Beneath this blind, bewildering shew

Of shapes that on the darkness trace
Transitions fair and fugitive,
Lies hid that Power upon whose Face
No child of man shall gaze and live.

Like one on purple heights that stands
While mountain echoes round him roll,
Screening his forehead with his hands,
And following through the gulfs of soul

Some thought that far before him flies—
Thus, Power eternal and unknown,
We muse on Thine immensities,
Yet find Thee in Thy Son alone.

Emanuel—God with us—in Him
We see the Formless, and the Vast,
Like mountain outlines, large and dim,
On lifted mists at sunrise cast.

"The Word made Flesh!" O Power Divine,
Through Him, through Him, we guess at Thee,
And deepliest feel that He is Thine
When throned upon His mother's knee.

Caro factus est.

XLIII.

When from beneath the Almighty Hand
The suns and systems rushed abroad,
Like coursers which have burst their band,
Or torrents when the ice is thawed;

When round in luminous orbits flung
The great stars gloried in their might;
Still, still, a bridgeless gulf there hung
'Twixt Finite things and Infinite.

That crown of light Creation wore
Was edged with vast unmeasured black;
And all of natural good she bore
Confessed her supernatural lack.

For what is Nature at the best?
An arch suspended in its spring;
An altar-step without a priest;
A throne whereon there sits no king.

As one stone-blind that fronts the morn,
The world before her Maker stood,
Uplifting suppliant hands forlorn—
God's creature, yet how far from God!

Oh Shepherd Good! The trackless deep
He pierced, that lost one to restore!
His Universe—a wildered sheep—
Upon His shoulder home He bore!

That Universe His Priestly robe,
The Kingly Pontiff raised on high
The worship of the starry globe:—
The gulf was bridged, and God was nigh.

Vas Spirituale.

XLIV.

High, wingèd Heart, and crowned with fire!
O winged with pinions of the morn,
O crowned with flames whose every spire
Bears witness to that crown of thorn!

Fair Dove of God, that, still at rest,
On-speed'st in never wavering flight,
Winging the illimitable Breast—
The Omnipresent Infinite;

We stagnate as in seas of lead,
Ice-cold, or warmed with earthly fires;
O that like thine our souls were fed
With sun-like, yet serene desires!

A vase of quenchless love thou art,
Drawn from that boundless Breast divine:—
O that in thee, on-rushing Heart,
Might rest, one hour, this heart of mine!

Regina Angelorum.

XLV.

Ere yet mankind was made; ere yet
The sun, and she that rules the night,
Were in their heavenly stations set,
God's Sons were playing in His sight.

Age after age those armies vast
In winding line had upward flown,
Yet ne'er their shadows higher cast,
Than on the first step of the Throne.

And downward through the unsounded space
If those had sunk who soared above,
They ne'er had found the buried base
Of Godhead's Condescending Love—

Then He, the God Who made them, proved:
For, high and higher as they soared,
Hymning the Eternal Son beloved,
The God from God, and Lord from Lord,

He showed them, in that Form decreed,
Their God made man—man's hope and trust—
"The Woman," and "The Woman's Seed,"
He showed—the Unbounded bound in dust.

As when from some world-conquering height
The shepherd sees, ere risen the sun,
His advent clothe the cloud with light,
Before them thus that Vision shone:

And while, in wonder half, half fear,
That Child, that Mother fixed their eye,
He bade those heavenward hosts revere
Their God in His Humility.

Set was that Infant as a sign:—
In endless bliss confirmed were they
Who hailed that hour the Babe Divine;
Self-sentenced those who turned away.

Mulier Amicta Sole.

XLVI.

A Woman "clothèd with the sun," *
Yet fleeing from the Dragon's rage!—
The strife in Eden-bowers begun
Swells upward to the latest age.

That Woman's Son is throned on high;
The angelic hosts before Him bend:
The sceptre of His empery
Subdues the worlds from end to end.

Yet still the sword goes through her heart,
For still on earth His Church survives:
In her that Woman holds a part:
In her she suffers, and she strives.

Around her head the stars are set;
A dying moon beneath her wanes:
By Death hath Death been slain: and yet
The Power accurst awhile remains.

Break up, strong Earth, thy stony floors,
And snatch to penal caverns dun
That Dragon from the pit that wars
Against the Woman and her Son!

* Rev. xii. 1.

XLVII.

Regent of Change, thou waning Moon,
Whom they, the sons of night, adore,
Her foot is on thee! Late or soon
Heap up upon the expectant shore

The tides of Man's Intelligence;
Or backward to the blackening deep
Remit them: Knowledge won from Sense
But sleeps to wake, and wakes to sleep.

Where are the hands that reared on high
Heaven-threat'ning Babel? where the might
Of them, that giant progeny,
The Deluge dealt with? Lost in night.

The child who knows his creed doth stretch
A sceptred hand o'er Space, and hold
The end of all those threads that catch
In wisdom's net the starry fold.

The Sabbath comes: the work-days six
Go by. Meantime, of things to be,
O Salutary Crucifix,
We clasp the burning heart in thee:

We clasp the end that knows no end;
The Love that fears no lessening moon;
The Truth in which all mysteries blend;
His Truth, His Word—the One Triune.

XLVIII.

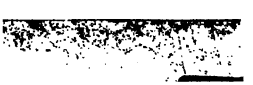
No ray of all their silken sheen
  The leaves first fledged have lost as yet:
Unfaded, near the advancing queen
  Of flowers, abides the violet.

The rose succeeds—her month is come:—
  The flower with sacred passion red:
She sings the praise of martyrdom,
  And Him for whom His martyrs bled.

The perfect work of May is done:
  Hard by a new perfection waits:—
The twain, a sister and a nun,
  A moment parley at the grates.

The whiter Spirit turns in peace
  To hide her in the cloistral shade:—
'Tis time that you should also cease,
  Slight carols in her honour made.

EPILOGUE.



Epilogue.

I GAZED—it was the Paschal night—
In vision on the starry sphere:
Like suns the stars made broad their light:—
Then knew I Earth to Heaven drew near.

The Thrones of Darkness down were hurled;
The Veil was rent; the Bond was riven;
And, breathed upon by God, the World
Flamed forth into the destined Heaven.

Like one by God upheld, with awe
I turned from star-changed sun to sun
That ringed the earth in ranks, and saw
A Spirit o'er each that stood thereon,

And, standing, pierced with beam divine
That sunrise from a thousand suns
As when on earliest climbers shine
The thousand Alpine spires at once,

All ice. Unmeasured spread the abyss
Of glory: every way it spread:
Yet in that world were gleams of this;
And in that Life were fair things dead.

If God should touch some mountain Land,
Unseal its sunless halls, and say,
"Thou never-quarried City, stand
At last in Heaven, and meet the day,"

Those hills transformed would still retain
Some rocky trace of things that were,
And sun-gilt street and skiey Fane
Recall long cliff and lion-lair:—

So here it seemed; and many a Palm
I saw that burgeoned buds of fire,
And wind-uplifted locks, yet calm,
And heaven-like eyes of still desire.

There stood the Saints by suffering proved,
Exiles from God to God returned,
And near them those our childhood loved,
Revered the most, and longest mourned.

Then lo! through all that throbbing frame
Of things beheld and things unseen
Rolled forth that Name which none can name—
Celestial music, not terrene:

And down that luminous Infinite
I saw an Altar and a Throne;
And, near to each, a Form, all light,
That, resting, moved, and moved Alone:

But if He filled that Throne, or knelt
That Altar nigh, or Lamb-like lay,
I saw not. This I saw, and felt,
That Son of Man was God for aye.

That Son of Man arose, and stood,
And from His Vest, more white than snow,
Slowly there dawned a Cross of Blood
That through the glory seemed to grow:

Above the heavens His Hands He raised
To bless those Worlds whose race was run;
And lo! in either palm there blazed
The blood-red rose of Victory won;—

That Blood the Bethlehem Shepherds eyed,
Warming His cheek Who slept apart—
That Blood He drew, the Crucified,
Far-fountained from His Mother's Heart.

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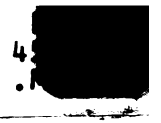

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